PEOPLE'S FRONT ILLUSION

By JAY LOVESTONE

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THE PEOPLE'S FRONT ILLUSION

From "Social Fascism" to the "People's Front"

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I. ESSENCE AND BACKGROUND

IT has been a long time since so many members of the Communist Party have been in as questioning a mood as they are at present. Not since the big split in the American and other sections of the Communist International in 1929 have so many communist sympathizers indicated such grave doubts about the general line of the Comintern.

Why this new phenomenon? How is it that such manifestations are possible after years of untiring effort of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (E.C.C.I.) to extirpate root and branch all critics and critical ideas?

One need but look at the present program and practice of the Communist Party of the United States (C.P.U.S.A.), whose leadership is carrying out the newest Comintern line faithfully and blindly, to find the answer to these questions. One need but examine the farcical turn this line has taken in the Communist Party of Canada—and the tragic turn this line is taking in the banner party of the Comintern (C.I.), the French Communist Party, to understand why increasing numbers of proletarians, in the Communist Parties or sympathetic to them, are either forced into open revolt or into a state of complete disaffection.

What is this new policy of the Comintern? How is it translated into life? What should members of the Communist Party do about it? What should workers who are communists but who find themselves unable to join the official Communist Party do about it? Is there a way out of the very serious condition into which the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union have been driven?

The Newest Line

The sum and substance of the newest line of the Comintern is the following: The present world situation, it holds, is everywhere

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characterized by a struggle between democracy (i.e. bourgeois or capitalist democracy) and fascism. In some countries fascism has already won. There the job of the Communist Parties is to do everything possible to restore this democracy (Germany). In other countries, the menace of fascism is growing in varying degrees (France, England, U.S.A.). Here the main task of the communists is to save capitalist democracy from the onrushing hordes of fascism. In both cases, it is necessary for the Communist Parties to collaborate not only with organizations and political parties of the lower middle class but even with those of other sections of the capitalist class if the latter are prepared to defend the democratic state (the form of government now prevailing in the U. S. A., Great Britain and France). This collaboration of "all anti-fascist forces" is to be secured by the communists even at the cost of giving up both the right to propagate the principles of communism and the right of independent working class action in defense of the most elementary immediate interests of the proletariat.

More than that. This line is carried over into the realm of international policy. The programmatic declaration on the war question made by George Dimitroff, general secretary of the Communist International, provides for the various Comintern sections rallying to the defense of the democratic (capitalist) countries against the aggression of the fascist (capitalist) powers. This means that the Communist Parties are no longer to try to win over the working class to a program of militant class struggle against the imperialist ruling classes in those cases in which the capitalist classes insure their domination through the so-called democratic form of state—especially in case of a war with a fascist state.

These tactics of class collaboration at home—in the so-called democratic countries—have been baptized with the name of People's Front. These tactics of defense of the "democratic fatherland" against fascist assaults are paraded as efforts in behalf of universal peace and progress. The latter is really an extension of the former. The two are organically tied together. Both sets of tactics are a monstrous violation of Marxist and Leninist teachings on the state and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism and against imperialist war. As "brilliant tactical maneuvers," as strategy modeled on the theory of the "Trojan Horse" (Dimitroff), they are suicidal. As an even momentary break with communist principles, such moves are costly

beyond calculation or repair—regardless of the nobility of the motives animating the tacticians. This criticism is not based on dogma or the mechanical parroting of a phrase or finding of Marx, Engels, Lenin —or even Stalin. It is the criticism of a policy which turns its back on some of the most fundamental experiences and lessons of history. We must continue to test theories and policies in the light of their real effects on life.

Back to First Principles

On this basis only will we examine some of the concrete acts of the Comintern and its sections, since its Seventh Congress in the summer of 1935. To do so it is necessary to recapitulate and reaffirm a number of positions which are axiomatic for all Marxists, for all revolutionaries in the labor movement. This repetition of the obvious is made necessary because since the Seventh Congress the C.I., with increasing frequency and crudeness, has been acting in utter disregard and even contempt of the principles of communism in regard to bourgeois democracy and imperialist war. Besides, it is necessary to call attention to certain basic ideas and principles in order to see more clearly the sinister significance of the practical application of the newest line of the Comintern in the struggle against fascism and imperialist war.

In the days before the Seventh World Congress, Marxists, communists, never spoke of democracy in the abstract. They always realized that there is no such thing as pure democracy in a society divided into classes. Today, the official communists seem to have forgotten, or at least act as if they had never learned, that modern history knows two kinds of democracy: the capitalist democracy of the type we have in the U.S.A., Great Britain and France, and the proletarian democracy of the type we have in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it had always been the contention of all communists—those in the Comintern as well as those in the International Communist Opposition—that, as the class struggle sharpens, the mask of bourgeois democracy is discarded and reveals capitalist dictatorship in its open ugly, brutal form—fascism. Until recently, the official communists went along with us in pointing out the organic connection between the capitalist dictatorship known as "democracy" and the capitalist dictatorship known as "fascism." Time and again Earl

Browder himself pointed out how false it is to conclude that "fascism is the opposite of capitalist democracy" or that "this democracy is the means of combatting and deflating fascism." On countless occasions the party members were taught that it is impermissible to counterpose "democracy against dictatorship" and that "capitalist democracy is not the enemy but the mother of fascism, that it is not the destroyer but the creator of fascism" and that, while it is true that "fascism destroys democracy," it is criminal "to propagate the falsehood that democracy will destroy fascism."

But "Conditions Have Changed"

Perhaps the official party leadership will explain that "conditions have changed" since Hitler triumphed in Germany. Would they have communists believe that since fascism conquered Germany bourgeois democracy is no longer a mechanism by means of which its victims are deluded into approving their continued status as an oppressed lower class? Certainly the comrades in the leadership of the Comintern do not predicate their new attitude towards the capitalist democracies on the conclusion that since Hitler came into power England, France and the U.S.A. have become much more genuinely democratic in their relations to the working classes and the oppressed colonial masses in their empires.

Let us turn to the field of international politics, that is, the field of the international class struggle. Would the comrades in charge of the various sections of the Comintern have us believe that, in the event of a war between democratic France and fascist Poland on the one side and fascist Germany on the other, the French and Polish workers should become chauvinists and patrioteers and rally to their national colors in order to defeat fascist Germany on the field of battle? Would Comrades Browder and Hathaway, for instance, have Comrade X or Mr. Y, if he were elected to Congress, vote for the establishment of defensive naval bases in the Pacific in order to help defend democratic U.S.A. against "fascist Japan"? And would Browder or Hathaway say that in a war against Nipponese imperialism with the U.S.S.R. lined up with the U.S.A., the objectives of the Washington-Wall Street government would become non-imperialist or progressive?

Background of Present Course

The present ultra-right line of the Comintern may seem quite a

long way from the ultra-left course which preceded it. Some may be at a loss to understand how it comes that the C. I. could swing from one extreme to the very opposite. There is no great distance traversed in this swing. First, extremes do meet. The fundamental approach is identical in the ultra-left line of yesterday and the ultra-right line of today. In both cases the Comintern has discarded the Marxist method of examining and evaluating mass movements and social struggles from the point of view of dynamic class relations.

An examination of both lines will reveal their blood-brotherhood and disclose the fact that the ultra-right line is only the ultra-left line standing on its head. In the days of the third period and social-fascism, in the ultra-left days of "class against class," the French Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) was held to be so bad that *the Comintern could see no difference between this Socialist Party of Blum and the Radical Party of Herriot.* Then the French Socialist Party was a "bourgeois party." Today, in the ultra-right period, in the days of the "people against the two hundred families," the Radical Party has become so good that *the Comintern can again see no difference between the Radical Party of Daladier and the Socialist Party.*

In both cases, in both "periods," the Comintern failed to measure in class terms. It, therefore, arrived at a false estimate in each instance. Here is the common root of the two types of errors, branching out in opposite directions.

In the ultra-left course, with its theory of social-fascism, the Comintern refused to recognize *any* difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism. In those days all parties, with the exception of the official communist organizations, were labeled fascist or branded social-fascist. Then, the C.I. went so far as to herald the arrival of a fascist regime in Germany as an essential prerequisite for the "revolutionization" of the masses. This description of policy is not a fantasy. It was printed in a "resolution of the Presidium of the Comintern on the situation in Germany," after Hitler took power:

> "The Communist Party was right in giving the name of social-fascists to the Social-Democrats. . . .
>
> "The establishment of an open fascist dictatorship, by destroying all the democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from the influence of social-democracy, accelerates the rate of Germany's development towards proletarian revolution." (*Communist International,* No. 8, pp. 245-246, May 1, 1933)

When this outrageous stuff was gospel in the Comintern, all conflicts within and between bourgeois parties were considered sham battles. Compare this position with that of the American party leadership in the last campaign when it sought to find *fundamental* differences between Roosevelt and Landon. A veritable 180-degree turn! There is nothing more fallacious than the conclusion that wrong policy turned on its head becomes correct policy.

Though the ultra-left theory prevented viewing class relations and divisions as they actually were, it had one redeeming feature. In the days before the Seventh World Congress of the C.I. it was not only permissible but imperative for the various parties to stress the independent role of the proletariat as a class. Then, there was no loose talk about that fantastic and vague concept, the "people." The mistake then lay in the assumption that the Communist Parties had already assumed the leadership of the working class. Thus, there resulted the fallacious substitution of the independent action of the party as such for the independent action of the working class as a whole.

False Approach Persists

Applying an equally un-Marxian method today, and moved by despair over the defeats brought on by the ultra-left course, the Comintern has flown in panic to the ultra-right strategy of the People's Front.

According to the People's Front theory, fascism is not a form of the rule of *the bourgeoisie as a class,* but rather the "dictatorship of the most imperialist, the most chauvinist elements of finance capital" (resolution of the Seventh World Congress). Hence, in France, fascism would appear to be a dictatorship of the wealthiest "two hundred families." In the U.S.A., we shall perhaps soon be told that fascism is a dictatorship of the famous "four hundred" over all the rest of the capitalists as well as over all the workers and farmers!

Only on this basis can one comprehend the proposal to set up a united front of all the people which shall include not only the working class but also the petty bourgeoisie and that section of the capitalist class which does not belong to "the most imperialist, the most chauvinist elements of finance capital." It is only on the basis of such an approach that the Communist Party of the U.S.A. could get out a special Christmas Day issue of its central organ, the *Daily Worker,* in which it declared editorially: "The Pope was *ill-advised* in the utterance which he made"—the attack on world communism.

In the same Christmas Day issue of the *Daily Worker,* there was featured *without comment or criticism* the following holiday greetings from a notorious gutter champion of the papal struggle against communism and the labor movement, Dorothy Day, editor of the *Catholic Worker*:

> "The *Catholic Worker* joins in an appeal for democracy and peace and, therefore, asks you to join in a protest against all dictatorships—fascist and bolshevist; against all suppression of civil liberty—fascist and bolshevist. That includes freedom of religious propaganda, education and organization—against all war, whether imperialist, civil or class. Merry Christmas." (*Daily Worker,* December 25, 1936)

This shameful anti-working class epistle could appear in a paper calling itself communist *only on the basis of the People's Front theory.* Isn't Dorothy Day one of the "people"? Isn't she in favor of democracy? Isn't the big thing today the "struggle between democracy and fascism"?

Democracy and Dictatorship

We cannot repeat too often that the evaluation of bourgeois democracy must be made realistically and, therefore, viewed in the light of the class conflicts of the decaying capitalist system. It is only because the Comintern failed to do so that its section in France demands the defense of declining bourgeois democracy there, that its sections in Germany and Italy demand the restoration and revitalization of their defunct capitalist democracy. It is only on this basis that the American C.P. could make its central slogan in the last presidential elections the "defense of democracy" in a country where the first job of the communists and all class-conscious workers is to disillusion the masses with the "virtues" of the prevaling system of bourgeois democracy. In short, in practice the People's Front policy entails not merely a postponement of the struggle but even the abandonment of the agitation for the proletarian dictatorship *for an indefinite period.*

Do not our comrades in the Comintern see that only a golden-age of capitalism could end the menace of fascism, insofar as its objective roots go? No such age is in store for world capitalism. If the

danger of fascism is rooted in the decay of capitalism as a social and economic system, is the attack on the system to be abated in order to postpone the final symptoms of the disease? Certainly the struggle for proletarian dictatorship and for socialism must proceed steadily and grow throughout the period when bourgeois democracy is sick, if it is to be victorious over the rising fascist forces.

Hence, to ask the proletariat to postpone the agitation or struggle for the proletarian dictatorship until the danger of fascism is over, means to postpone it for a period as long as capitalism lasts. This can mean nothing else but giving up the struggle for proletarian dictatorship altogether and for ever. The international working class is lucky indeed that the Soviet Union exists, to remind it of what a proletarian dictatorship is and should be. We can likewise be thankful for the heroic struggle in Spain where the workers and peasants are beginning to talk the only language the ruling classes and their Pope and Jesuit Order understand.

In view of the Comintern policies, particularly as applied today by the French C.P., the E.C.C.I. should again turn to what Marx wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.*

> "To make a united front against the bourgeois forces, the petty bourgeoisie and the workers had formed a coalition on their side, the so-called Social-Democratic Party. . . . In February 1849, there were banquets to celebrate the reconciliation. A joint program was drafted, joint electoral committees were founded and joint candidatures were arranged for. The revolutionary point of view of the socialist demands of the proletariat was blunted and these demands were given a democratic gloss. Conversely, in the case of the democratic demands of the petty bourgeoisie, the purely political form was effaced, and they were made to seem as socialistic as possible."

Marx was scathing in his criticism of the People's Front of 1849 even when bourgeois democracy was approaching its period of highest vitality and was not, as it is today, in its period of decline and decay. He denounced such collaboration even when the bloc was with a petty bourgeois party (the Mountain) which resorted to armed insurrection against the big bourgeoisie, and not with a party like the present Radical Party of France which, though it has a mass petty bourgeois following, is completely dominated by the big bourgeoisie and has been the central governing party of French capitalism since the opening of the century. Let no one forget that the continued

undermining of the democratic rights of the workers of France has generally come through government administrations dominated by the Radical Party.

Marxists are for collaboration with the petty bourgeoisie *under certain conditions*—so long as they are prepared to fight side by side with the proletariat against the big bourgeoisie, against monopoly capital. But this does not mean that we must line up with the small or bigger bourgeoisie for the purpose of defending and perpetuating capitalism as a social system. In the same sense Marx and Engels were for collaboration with the petty bourgeoisie *when the central issue was that of a bourgeois revolution in Germany, when such a revolution was the next historical step forward.* However, today, the next forward step is not a bourgeois revolution, either in Germany, or France, or Spain, but a proletarian revolution.

New Role of Bourgeoisie

It is wrong to conclude that, because the bourgeoisie played a progressive role against feudalism, they will, therefore, be able to play a progressive role in the struggle against fascism. The fact that fascism has certain features in common with medieval barbarism does not mean that the Hitler or Mussolini regime spells a return to feudalism, an abandonment of the *capitalist* base of society. Fascism is only the outward or political expression of capitalism in complete decay. The very emergence of the fascist movement proves that only a proletarian revolution can today guarantee and promote the progress of humankind. Therefore, in the struggle against fascism, the working class cannot have a *permanent* alliance with bourgeois parties and organizations—unless, of course, the working class gives up the struggle against capitalism as a system in decay.

It is significant that, in 1848 when the bourgeoisie was still able to play a revolutionary role, Marx and Engels did not go so far as the Comintern goes in its relations with petty and even bigger bourgeois outfits—today, when capitalism is declining as a world system! Today, we are no longer in a situation where we can support the bourgeoisie in order to advance our own class interests. The People's Front strategy is in diametric opposition to the basic fact of the present world situation—the reactionary nature of the bourgeoisie as

a ruling class and the reactionary nature of capitalism as a social system.

Finally, the Comintern would do well to remember and be guided by the following position taken by the Communist League in Germany in 1850—even when the bourgeoisie could, unlike today, still play somewhat of a progressive role: "The workers party will collaborate with the petty bourgeoisie against the reactionaries whom both aim to overthrow, but it will oppose the petty bourgeoisie on all issues pertaining to the working class." For one thing, this precludes a permanent bloc even with the petty bourgeoisie; it prohibits the postponement or repression of working class issues and interests; it assumes as a prerequisite for such a temporary coalition the actual engagement of the petty bourgeoisie in a fight against the reactionaries. In none of the requirements does the People's Front fulfill these elementary conditions. It violates all of them—at the workers' expense.

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II. SOME DISTORTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

DUE to the course now being pursued by the Comintern, many workers in and around the revolutionary labor movement are subjected to the weirdest notions about the so-called People's Front. At this time when the People's Front strategy is being so widely discredited in Spain and France, it is especially appropriate to clear up some misconceptions spread and some illusions fostered in regard to this course by the various sections of the C.I. as well as by such self-styled left organizations as the American Socialist Party.

An Old Disease—A New Name

To many, the People's Front strategy appears as something new, as a policy just discovered or invented by the Comintern to suit the new situation growing out of the Hitler victory in Germany. This is a misconception pure and simple. The People's Front policies, now being pursued by the Comintern and the Socialist (Second) International are not really new. They are old. They are the moth-eaten policies of working class coalition with the bourgeoisie at the expense of the real interests of the proletariat. The People's Front is class collaboration under a new name. It is the pre-war "cabinet-socialism" rebaptized; it is the old game of coalition with the bourgeoisie dressed up in a new uniform.

Yet, it must be admitted that there is something new to this People's Front. In the past, when coalition or collaboration with capitalist parties was applied by the social democracy, as in Germany for instance, the Communist Parties vigorously repudiated and fought it. Today, the official communists not only do not fight it, but they indorse it. They not only indorse it, they even boast of having initiated it; they support it and take full responsibility for it before the masses. In the past, the conservative social democratic leaders were somewhat slowed down in their pace of surrendering working class interests upon demand or under pressure of the bourgeoisie, because they feared the effects of communist criticism and opposition

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in the ranks of the masses. Today, on the basis of the People's Front policy, the reformists have a free hand to proceed with their policies of neglect and disregard of working class interests, because the Communist Parties have been drawn into the "Great Coalition," into the national front as it were.

One need but examine the events in Spain and France for a painful confirmation of our estimate. The swing to the right at the last congress of the French Radical Party, the more severe demands it is making on the workers as a price of collaboration—after about a year of the People's Front with the Communist and Socialist Parties—should be a source of enlightenment even to those least eager to see the truth. That is how the People's Front undermines the workers' rights and fails to swing the middle class masses to the left!

Deliberate Distortion of Issue

As already emphasized, the theory of the People's Front is this: humanity, society, civilization in every country, is today confronted with one big struggle and one decisive choice. That struggle and that choice today is between bourgeois democracy—or just democracy to the social reformists like Leon Blum—and fascism. Blum puts it plainly as a struggle in behalf of the principles of 1789, that is, "a glorious battle" for the maintenance and preservation of the principles of the French bourgeois revolution of 1789. Lots of things have happened since 1789—even to France, although its premier and his communist apologists may not be fully aware of the changes or may choose to give the world the impression that nothing has happened. These "great and glorious principles" of 1789 did not drop down on France from the heavens; they did not arise or flourish in a vacuum. These "ideas and ideals" grew out of certain economic conditions, were rooted in certain social relations, had a certain type of class foundation, flourished in a certain kind of material soil. All of these are no more, due to more than a century of socio-economic developments.

Nor is fascism an accidental gift or curse from heaven. It is a legitimate offspring of the very democracy which the socialist Blum and the communist Thorez now ask the workers to defend by collaboration with such a capitalist party as the Radical Party, even when the latter sets as a condition for such collaboration the "suppressing of the stay-in-strikes, balancing the budget and achieving

monetary stabilization" and strangling the Spanish revolution with an arms embargo.

How better could the ground for fascism be prepared by the leadership of the French Socialist and Communist Parties than through their acceptance of these demands of the Radical Party? What are these but demands which rob the French workers of their most effective strike weapon, shift the burden of the devaluation of the franc onto the backs of the toilers and help insure the victory of fascism in Spain, a victory which would inevitably stimulate and encourage tremendously Colonel de la Rocque's advance in France?

Obviously, the workers are not choosing here. A bed of thorns and cold graves are being prepared for them by their own leaders who have adopted suicidal policies. Most of all, these policies have been adopted in a period when that form of capitalist dictatorship known as bourgeois democracy is becoming increasingly ineffective as an instrument of class domination over the workers, at the very time when bourgeois parliamentarism has outlived all political usefulness, and at the moment when the faith of the masses in parliamentary institutions is ebbing rapidly. At such a time when the most favorable objective situation exists for pitting genuine working class democracy, (proletarian dictatorship) against capitalist parliamentary democracy, the Communist Parties and revolutionary socialists and social-democrats are denying themselves the right to propagate and work for the proletariat's taking over all power and putting an end to the very conditions in which fascism is rooted.

In short, precisely at that moment when bourgeois parliamentary democracy has become so feeble and discredited that the capitalists themselves are turning to counter-revolutionary anti-parliamentarism as a new type of dictatorship (fascism), do the official Communist and Socialist Parties completely turn their backs upon the revolutionary anti-parliamentarism of the working class as a way out. Would the Blums and the Browders, the Thorezes and the Thomases have us believe that when and if capitalist democracy gets stronger it will then be a more favorable time for us to propagate and work for the achievement of working class democracy? Or shall we conclude that Browder and Thorez now agree with Blum and Thomas that the proletarian dictatorship is no democracy at all, is not working class democracy? Sometimes the leaders of the official Communist Parties outside the U.S.S.R. talk and act in this way. What choice or lead-

ership are they really offering the proletariat in these critical hours? Are they not helping the reformist leaders to create artificially a choice which is no choice at all, which does not remove the source and soil of fascism, a choice which only paves the way for a fascist victory in one form or another?

People's Front Is Not United Labor Front

In the desperate effort to get and hold working class support for the People's Front course, the socialist and communist leadership have deliberately and systematically confused it with the strategy of the united front of labor. They would have us believe that united action, joint struggle of working class organizations for the achievement of some specific concrete immediate interest or objective (regardless of differences over certain principles amongst these labor organizations) is synonymous with working class organizations collaborating with capitalist organizations on the basis of a program of maintaining capitalism in the garb of bourgeois democracy. To confuse the united front of labor against the employing class interests or the capitalist government with the People's Front under whose very eyes, nose and ears the Spanish fascists prepared their armed insurrection, or with the People's Front as just decreed by the Radical Party congress in France, is the sheerest political idiocy. One might as well identify the great French general strike, of February 12, 1934, which broke the fascist onslaught and which was a true united front of labor with the proposals of Salengro, Blum, Duclos, Thorez, Daladier and Herriot to the French workers, at the height of the strike wave, to stop strikes, to discontinue occupying factories and to accept compulsory arbitration.

People's Front Is No Workers Government

In the same fashion, propaganda has been broadcast deliberately, as well as unintentionally, confusing a proletarian united front government with a so-called anti-fascist People's Front government. Here are involved the most vital interests of the working class. Confusion under such circumstances is most costly. We of the International Communist Opposition attempted to draw the line of demarcation between these two types of government. On November 9, 1935, in its letter to the Comintern on the line laid down by the Seventh Congress

for the People's Front, the International Communist Opposition declared as follows:

> *"It is conceivable that in the course of a mighty united front movement based on strong non-partisan united front organs, the question of the government is put before it—before the communists have a majority in the non-partisan class organs of the united front.* Under such circumstances the attitude of the communists toward the formation of a government is decisive for the winning over for communism of the masses organized in the united front movement. *A situation may arise when such an experiment is necessary in order to eliminate the very last of democratic illusions of the workers.* In this sense, Lenin proposed to the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries in September 1917 to dissolve the coalition with the bourgeois parties, especially with the Cadets, and to take over the government. Under the condition that this government would grant the Bolsheviks full freedom of action, Lenin was ready to support it. *This was correct because the preparations for the struggle for power, the ultimate aims of the communists, were facilitated.* In the same sense, the Communist Party of Germany (Spartacus League) proposed to the trade unions, the Social Democratic Party, and the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany to take over the government and pledged itself to support it on the same conditions during the Kapp putsch in 1920. This policy was approved in principle by Lenin. During the united front actions in 1922-23 the C.P.G. supported social democratic governments in Saxony and Thuringia on the basis of their acceptance of a program of partial demands which guaranteed the C.P.G. freedom of activity and presupposed the break of the social democracy with the bourgeoisie. The C.P.G. had as a base of support in the execution of this policy—broad, extra-parliamentary mass organs (factory councils, proletarian centurions and committees for control of supplies and prices). This policy was essentially correct despite errors in its application which must be avoided in the future. *The slogan of 'a government of anti-fascist People's Front', however, dangerously blurs the class character of such a government because it provides for the possibility of participation by the bourgeoisie in such a government.* This we reject."

Let no one overlook the following very important differences between a People's Front government and a proletarian united front government:

Our attitude towards a united front working class government is based on its being an experiment necessary for *eliminating* the very last remnants of bourgeois democratic illusions among the workers. With the People's Front government strategy, the objective is the

very opposite—*to prolong and preserve* the decaying bourgeois democratic system, parliamentary capitalist democracy and all the illusions the workers may entertain.

We can properly support a united front working class government under the condition that *it grant us full freedom of action to prepare for the struggle for power and communism.* With the People's Front government, however, we face a totally different situation. Here the bourgeoisie allows us to go into partnership with it and to support its "mild" government on the condition that *the workers do not fight even for their immediate demands,* that they give up the weapon of sit-down strikes and occupation of the factories, drop all extra-parliamentary actions, and pledge loyalty to bourgeois law and order (Biarritz Congress).

In a proletarian united front government *all bourgeois parties are excluded,* but in a People's Front government spokesmen of *the bourgeoisie are not only included but have the final veto power.* Carried to its logical conclusion, a People's Front government leads to a national front government—a French Front as proposed by the French C.P.

How Not To Win Middle Class Support

With these tactics of the People's Front its proponents and champions would have us believe that the working class will win the aid of the middle classes in the struggle against capitalism! Such claims are unfounded. The People's Front strategy and stratagems have been applied for about a year in France. The Radical Party of Herriot and Daladier is supposed to be the great party of the French middle class. It is the party without which there could be no so-called People's Front in France today. Compare the decisions it made at its Radical congress (Wagram) in 1935 (when the People's Front had not matured so much, when the working class was preparing its offensive and not giving it up to the bourgeoisie) with the decisions it made at the Biarritz congress in October 1936. At the latter sessions the Radicals, who admit that they would have lost still more in the elections had they not gone into the People's Front with the Socialist and Communist Parties, made arrogant demands upon the workers.

Is this aiding the working class? Is this the way to win over the middle class in the struggle against big capital? Can the working

class defend its economic and social positions against the attacks of big capital any better because it has the "assistance" of such "allies"? Is this the way the Bolsheviks of Russia won the great mass of the middle class to its side in the struggle against Czarism and capitalism?

Of course, the working class should form alliances with the lower strata of the middle class. But these alliances should be under the leadership of the working class and not at the expense of the working class; such alliances should be for a common struggle against the common enemy—monopoly capital—and not for the purpose of systematically retreating before big capital as the People's Front has been making the French proletariat do before big capital in France. When we say that the proletariat should make alliances with lower middle class organizations in the struggle against big capital, we do not approve alliances with bourgeois parties, like the Radical Party of France, that are dominated by the big bourgeoisie and therefore systematically sabotage the struggle against big capital. Merely calling such an alliance a People's Front does not change its suicidal character.

For the working class in general and the Communist Party in particular to yield to the prejudices and ignorance of the lower bourgeoisie and adopt or defend these prejudices as their own tenets does not radicalize the petty bourgeoisie nor develop the class consciousness of the proletariat. It serves only to impede the struggle against fascism or any other form of capitalist reaction. In other words, in attempting to sell communism to the middle class, Browder and Thorez should not emasculate the communist program. For decades the social democracy has tried to sell socialism in this fashion and the results are to be clearly seen in Germany and Austria.

Confusion No Road To Victory

Too many socialists and communists have joined the chorus of capitalist confusionists in speaking of democracy, communism, socialism, fascism and capitalism—all in one breath, as if they were categories of the same type. This is confusion worse confounded—and it is primarily at the expense of the workers.

When we speak of communism and socialism on the one hand and capitalism on the other we are speaking of and comparing or contrasting *social systems.* When we speak of democracy we do not speak of it in the abstract. It is either capitalist democracy or work-

ing class democracy. When we speak of capitalist democracy and compare it with fascism we are not comparing social systems but types of dictatorships, *forms of state,* utilized by entire ruling classes to maintain their power, to help continue a certain type of social system. Thus, we have the identical social system (capitalism) prevailing in England, France, the U.S.A., Germany and Italy, yet we have parliamentary capitalist democracy serve as the instrument, as the form of capitalist dictatorship in the first three countries, and the fascist dictatorship as the instrument of the defense and perpetuation of capitalism in the last two mentioned lands.

The "Great Democracies"—A Gigantic Fraud

Of all the flaws in the People's Front tactics, perhaps the most fatal one is the notion that the so-called great democracies are really anti-fascist, can be counted upon to serve as rallying centers in a showdown fight against fascism or a fascist power. The fate of Ethiopia and present developments in Spain give the lie to all such notions.

What and where are the "great democracies"? Imperialist U.S.A., with its billions of investments abroad, with its "freedom-breeding" Marine Corps, with its Southern lynch-civilization, with its starvation amidst plenty, with its government by injunction, is the most powerful and, therefore, the "greatest democracy." It was in no small measure through this Wall Street democracy and its uncrowned head, J. P. Morgan, that Mussolini was saved in 1926. It was none other than the government of that great People's Front president, Franklin D. Roosevelt (stealthily if not honestly and openly supported by the Communist Party), that made impossible the imposition of an effective (collective) oil embargo against Italy, when precisely such an embargo would have prevented Mussolini's winning the war and gobbling up Ethiopia, and would have hastened the overthrow of that castor-oil and hob-nail regime. Once again "democratic" America saved fascist Italy. But note how differently Roosevelt is treating the Spanish government, how speedily he has rushed to prevent a shipment of arms to the Spanish government which was entitled to it —even on the basis of capitalism's own international law!

Second in "greatness" among the "great democracies" is the British Empire with its inspiring Boer war traditions, with its noble regime

in India, with its model depressed areas! It is the "free and democratic monarchy" of Great Britain that took the initiative in the infamous Hoare-Laval project, that has made possible Italy's attempt to exploit as well as conquer Ethiopia. It is Britain's rubber stamp, Portugal, that has been the primary base of foreign imperialist conspiracies and campaigns against Spain.

Recently, the well-known *New York Times* London correspondent, Augur, let the cat out of the bag in regard to Britain's true role in the war of Franco, the Hitler-Mussolini creature, against the Spanish toiling masses. He said: "Frankly speaking, the British government and majority public opinion in this country would not object to the Insurgents winning with Germany's help" (December 26, 1936). It is this game that Lord Plymouth has been playing in the "Non-Intervention" Committee in London against the Spanish government, though the latter is entitled to totally different treatment even on the basis of bourgeois international law. Despite an occasional remark by Churchill or an incidental oblique expression by Eden, the "great democracy" of the "City" and King George VI remains the main force (by way of omission, if not always commission) responsible for Hitler's aggressive measures in the last three years.

The official communist spokesmen throughout the world have repeatedly pointed with pride to the government headed by Comrade Blum as the model People's Front government. It is this government on whose head and hands much of the proletarian and peasant blood spilled in Spain is to be found. Blum has passionately defended his blockade against the Spanish government which was elected on the basis of the very constitutional principles which are supposed to be so dear to him. And it is none other than this French People's Front government, supposedly the fountain-head of peace and freedom, the impregnable bulwark against fascism, which, along with Great Britain, is rushing to the rescue of Hitler's regime now in severe economic difficulties. Exactly at a moment when that most outrageous of fascist monstrosities is up against it, at a moment when the activity and the building of revolutionary organizations in Germany are most likely to be stimulated, the "great democracy" of France—a government led by a socialist and supported by the communists—goes to the aid of the sorely-pressed Hitler head-choppers, with an offer of cash and colonies.

The promise for peace and regulated rearmament to be exacted

from Germany in exchange for such assistance is surely not taken seriously even by its seekers. They need it merely to save face as they go to the rescue of German capitalism from accumulating difficulties and proletarian revolution. Thus, Mr. J. P. Philip, Paris correspondent of the *New York Times* reports: "For the first time since the World War there is apparent real and genuine concern in France over the economic distress in Germany (December 27, 1936). This is fully in line with the following from Augur: "The British and French governments, acting in unison, may soon be driven to take Hitler at his word and ask for information regarding the exact nature of the requirements calculated on a scale sufficient to end the present economic crisis." It is obvious that a collapse of Hitler Germany might seriously endanger world capitalism as a system. To stave off this danger, the British and French bourgeoisie are prepared to sacrifice some of their immediate imperialist interests.

This is how the "great democracies" have been fighting fascism and its most menacing expressions. This is precisely how reliable are the "great democracies" when it comes to the point of pushing back fascism abroad as well as at home. The moment the so-called democratic governments sense the danger of working class forces overthrowing a capitalist system, that moment they rush to the rescue of fascism—despite all their previous bluster about devotion to the ideals of democracy. In the class struggle it must never be forgotten that the blood of fundamental economic class interests is always thicker than the thin water of sweet phrases employed to hide bitter reality. That is why, in the interest of preserving capitalism in Italy and Germany, "democratic" Great Britain and "People's Front" France have time and again saved the necks of Hitler and Mussolini. Here it must also be recalled that it was after the last world war "to make the world safe for democracy" that these very governments waged war on the Soviets for years in order to restore capitalism in Russia—much as they feared a powerful Czarist empire.

Futility of Capitalist Treaties

One of the cornerstones of the People's Front strategy at home is an undying faith in the reliability of treaties of amity and comity in the bourgeois world. Much of this costly claptrap springs from an overestimation of the value of the Franco-Soviet pact to the U.S.S.R.

Somehow or other the patentees of the People's Front strategy have a special knack for conveniently keeping silent or complaining in loyal whispers about France's role in the Spanish situation, about Blum's trampling on every vestige of elementary international law and treaty relations.

The conduct of Blum in regard to Spain, however, since it reveals more clearly than anything else how little reliance should be placed on France's future faithful execution of the Franco-Soviet pact is of no mean significance to the U.S.S.R. Blum's systematic and persistent blockade of Spain affords damning proof aplenty of the futility of even the slightest faith in capitalist international law as an instrument of peace or as a weapon of struggle against fascism.

In stressing this, we do not at all object to the U.S.S.R. resorting to pacts even if they serve to lengthen the period of peace, the breathing spell for the Soviet Union, only by the time it takes to write and register such treaties. What we do underscore here is our adamant opposition to the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries softening or abandoning the class struggle against governments which momentarily may happen to have such treaties with the Soviet Union or may happen to be "democratic" in form, or may for the moment be at odds or in conflict with another capitalist class that rules through a fascist instead of a parliamentary dictatorship.

A False Alternative

Finally, the most pretentious claim made in behalf of the People's Front strategy and its goal of a People's Front government is that it is the only alternative to fascism. This has been the main song of the French C.P. in justification of its shameful policy of licking the boots of Radical Party leaders like Daladier and Chautemps, of calling upon the workers to desist from striking, of voting for the "conditional" banning of volunteers to Spain, of its sickening praise of bourgeois law and order, of its competition with Colonel de la Rocque in the realm of patriotism, of its feverish plea for normalizing the present (capitalist) French economy.

There is not the slightest justification in the charge that opposition by revolutionists to a People's Front government is an indirect way of preferring or accepting a Right government. Let no one forget that the Blum government is only a bourgeois government. The real

question is: to what kind of a government can a worker pledge loyalty without surrendering the class struggle?

We must never lose sight of the fact that the capitalist class would achieve its greatest success and security through the maintenance of a labor movement which is docile, which is bound by the rules of capitalist law and order, the rules of the game as laid down by the employing class government. Obviously, the employing class would prefer to have the labor movement behave in this fashion without first going through any major struggles, without any proletarian militant resistance. The capitalist class as such does not take to fascism because it likes it. There are certain costs and dangers to the bourgeoisie in a fascist regime. They would prefer to have or to get a docile labor movement without resorting to fascism.

There can be (as there has been) a government, a bourgeois government, a capitalist government but not yet a fascist government, for which the working class movement does not assume responsibility, on which the labor movement can exert pressure in order to get certain concessions and rights. Such a government, subject to the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary pressure of the masses, need not entail labor's giving up the right to strike, nor be given the power either to cut the heart out of the communist movement, or demoralize all independent working class activity on the basis of a spurious partnership a la People's Front. What we insist on—without reservation—is labor's not giving up its right and ability to resort to independent working class action.

We must always keep in mind as axiomatic for revolutionists that in no imperialist country is any government worthy of proletarian confidence or support. Likewise, we must never yield our right to rely on working class mass pressure on bourgeois governments since it is the decisive factor in the development of the class role in the class struggle. Once we surrender this right, as is being done increasingly by the Communist Party in France, we are sunk as a force capable of leading the masses to the left, for a revolutionary struggle, for a struggle against capitalism. In the last resort it is only such mass pressure or the real threat of such extra-parliamentary action that can get the workers anything or anywhere in the field of concessions or progress. In the class struggle, as in every other war, it is power and not self-disarmament that counts. To go into partnership with one section of the enemy class in order to hold back "a more reactionary"

section of the same class, must inevitably devitalize the working class struggle and, therefore, invite constant encroachments by the bourgeoisie as a whole.

This policy of voting for and supporting actively one capitalist government in order to avoid another which would be worse is not a new policy for labor. It is the cursed policy of the "lesser evil" resorted to for quite a while by the German social-democracy. It is in pursuing this course that the German social-democrats voted for and supported the Bruening government with its emergency decrees in order to avoid a von Papen government, then accepted von Papen in order to avoid von Schleicher, then began to pray for von Schleicher in order to escape Hitler. It did not take long for the social democrats, consistently pursuing this course, to try coming to terms with Hitler as a partner—and later to do business with him even as the sole holder of power. Accepting and backing the various bourgeois governments—each on the ground that it was the lesser evil in comparison with another capitalist government which would succeed it—inevitably and continuously led to worse and worse and insured the arrival of the worst—the Hitler regime.

In each instance the German social democracy asked the workers to desist from struggle and to make some concessions and sacrifices in order to avoid getting a worse government and thus making even bigger sacrifices. Actually, what was happening was that the workers systematically disarmed themselves by ceasing to resort to independent class action. As a result they constantly suffered worse governments and worse treatment, leading inexorably to the worst, to fascism. This is the danger in France, despite superficial performances and temporary pledges to the contrary. This danger is especially acute in France, because unlike Germany, the communists are also playing the nefarious game of the "lesser evil."

What Happened in France?

A glance at what has already happened in France further confirms our conclusions. The high tide of fascist threats came on February 6, 1934. The proletariat responded with a mighty general strike demonstration within six days. Soon the spontaneous movement for proletarian unity of action forced the leaders of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party to have their parties enter

into a united front and to insure trade union unity. By this time the backbone of this particular stage of the fascist menace was broken. The heavy blows of the proletariat drove the fascist hordes to cover and did not encourage them to boldness and attack on the labor organizations, as the apostles of class collaboration, of softening of class relations and of "national reconciliation," would have us believe militant working class action does.

It was more than a year after the united front of the proletariat dealt these hammer blows against Fascism in France that the Communist Party proposed the People's Front. In reality, it was not until the Wagram congress of the Radical Party was held in October 1935 that this People's Front partnership was consummated—of course, on the basis of the program of the Radicals. After this event, the Radical Party tolerated and kept Laval in office for months. The Daladier crew allowed Laval to be replaced by the right wing Radical Sarraut when it became necessary to do so for their election purposes. It was on this occasion that the Communist Party abstained from voting, that is, failed to vote against a bourgeois government—for the first time in the history of world communism! The May 1936 elections showed a continued swing of the masses to the left, with the Radical Party being saved from even more serious losses by its association with the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. To stem this powerful leftward tide and to decapitate its forces, an arrangement was made whereby Leon Blum would become the premier of a bourgeois government, whereby the proletarian parties would assume responsibility for maintaining law and order on the basis of capitalist economy and employing-class hegemony. This government has been constantly tossed about between the pressure of the proletarian masses on the one side and that of the biggest bourgeoisie on the other.

Only the mass pressure of the strike wave in June 1936 caused the Blum government and the Radical-led Senate to yield anything to the workers. But by the time it got around to bearing the burdens of devaluation, when the workers' organization were checked and prevented from taking adequate measures of struggle, the People's Front government, under the actual leadership of the bourgeois politicians and their Radical Party, rejected the sliding wage scale and robbed the workers of many of the gains they had won in the June mass struggles.

Of course, we do not want a fascist or reactionary government in

France or elsewhere. This, however, does not mean that the proletarian masses and their organizations need or can afford to give up their right to independent action, to extra-parliamentary activity. This does not mean that we must disarm ourselves in order to support or keep in office a government which is less far to the right. This road leads to suicide—whether or not its course is paved with the very best of intentions. In the light of experience in various countries it is unquestionable that such systematic surrender of proletarian initiative and mass action, such definite though gradual disarming of the workers' organizations, can lead to nothing but disaster. Let no one forget the tragic story of the Aventine opposition in Italy, of the People's Front policies in pre-fascist Austria, of the "lesser evil" in Germany.

In striking an inspiring contrast let us focus our attention on the road to victory traversed by the Russian Bolsheviks. Here we had the very antithesis of People's Front strategy and its faith in and reliance on bourgeois democracy as an instrument of struggle against capitalist reaction.

III. THE TEST IN LIFE: WHERE BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY IS STILL STRONG

THE break with the Leninist teachings in regard to bourgeois democracy manifests itself in especially crass form when the People's Front policy is mechanically transferred to countries where bourgeois democracy is still relatively strong and is not yet being challenged seriously by fascism as *the* form of capitalist dictatorship (U.S.A., Canada, England, Switzerland). We will turn the spotlight on the actual policies of the Comintern sections in these countries to see what we can learn from the practical application of the People's Front theory.

In the U. S. A.

On the theory that all sorts and species of people should be collected into one great "People's Front" to struggle against fascism, it is possible to understand how Major General Smedley Butler could win a place of honor at the councils of this motley "people's army" for freedom and democracy. But how can the party leadership reconcile this with the outburst of this "people's major general" against the efforts to raise funds for the heroic fighters in Spain? "What in hell is it our business what's going on in Spain?" roared this retired strike-breaker of the U. S. Marine Corps at an American League Against War and Fascism meeting, while the Spanish workers were giving their lives to beat back the Hitler-Mussolini onslaught.

It is pathetic to note how the proponents of the People's Front seek to rationalize their folly in order to hide its fallacies. Typical of this insidious habit of self-deception is the estimate of the disastrous election campaign of 1936 made by Comrade Browder before the Central Committee of the C.P. on December 4, 1935, when he declared: "Our Party's significant role was made possible by our understanding of the deep class currents in American politics." (*Daily Worker,* December 14, 1936). That this statement is a double-divorce

from truth is obvious from both the general results of the election and the results attained by the C.P. What shall the party membership, what shall the working class think of a leader that will thus deceive it?

In the light of the Roosevelt landslide, Comrade Browder can scarcely pin any medals on the People's Front policies even on the ground that they were helpful in saving the election for the "democratic" forces led by Roosevelt. As late as June 15, 1936 Browder so seriously misjudged "the deep class currents" as to state: "I am not assuming that Roosevelt has the edge in this election. I think it is anybody's election."

Yet, this should surprise no one, since, on the basis of the People's Front, the national convention of the C.P. adopted a resolution which emphasized the need "to work in the existing mass organizations," and then proceeded to drop any differentiation as to social or class composition amongst these organizations by citing as of equal importance: "trade unions, fraternal, farmer, middle class, Townsend clubs, Coughlin groups . . . etc." As a result of this People's Front approach, the C.P. offered this as its final appeal, as its trump card in the election campaign:

> "And above all else, the American people need a guaranty that our country shall not be dragged down the bloody path of Hitlerism, that we shall not be forced to protect our democracy through such desperate heroism as that required of the Spanish people as the price of their liberty. . . .
>
> "America has seen the Communist Party as the most consistent fighter for democracy, for the enforcement of the democratic provisions of our Constitution, for the defense of our flag and the revival of its glorious revolutionary traditions. America has seen that Communism is twentieth-century Americanism." (Earl Browder, *Daily Worker,* November 3, 1936)

Such an appeal is about as far away from the class struggle philosophy and practice as is the appeal of Pope Pius against communism. It is only the fetishism of the People's Front that could have given rise to the following ridiculous phantasy as an immediate post-election probability in the U. S. A.:

> "I raise the question, whether we have not the full right to believe, on the basis of the Hearst press, that the reactionaries of America

e 12th A.D. News" could
"The Soviet Constitution
eclaration of Indepedence."
he letter sent by Comrade
gion while the A. F. of L.
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gogue the demagogues. We
orking class vanguard party
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banner 6th Assembly Dis-
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ly, it is not an accident.

IPERIALISM AND WAR

rop the Leninist estimate of
the People's Front theory.
hrough the pretty words of
ere was an important move

made by Wall Street imperialism to fortify itself in its preparations for the next war, to assure the U. S. A. a more strategic economic and political position for its role first as a "neutral," later as an active participant, as the coming world war develops. Here was a studied attempt by the American government to win some additional business fields and markets for Wall Street in South America, and to assure American business of the maximum market there in the event that social revolution following the next war should reduce its markets in Europe or Asia. But, dazzled by the People's Front line of "national reconciliation," all that Comrade Browder could see in this imperialist maneuver was:

> "The speech made by Secretary of State Hull, at the Inter-American Peace Conference, is of great significance. It was a contribution to the mobilization of the anti-fascist forces of the world in the struggle against war, for the maintenance of peace, not only in the Americas but everywhere. . . .
>
> "But the main significance of this speech is that America is more and more emerging as the greatest power of the capitalist world on the side of peace, and against the fascist war-makers, and that in this position there is already an appeal to the masses of the people for organized support, not only governmental support, but mass support in every country to the struggle for peace." (*Daily Worker,* December 14, 1936)

In the light of these remarks by Comrade Browder before the Central Committee of the C.P. on December 4, 1936, the feverish efforts of Roosevelt and his State Department to check the flow of even antiquated war material to the legitimate republican government of Spain now under fire by the fascist hordes appear to be acts of unwarranted ingratitude. We hope that this will finally cause Browder to drop his theory that Roosevelt is somewhere in the middle wavering and vacillating in the struggle against capitalist reaction. . . .

And replying to a query in the *Freiheit* of May 19, 1936, its editor let loose as follows:

> "We can tell you only that if such a case should take place where Japan is threatening America and the Soviet Union and both countries agree to help each other in case of an attack by Japan, the duty of the American communists would naturally be to support America in the war with Japan, because this would help the Soviet Union against Japanese imperialism."

And through applying the tactics of the [illegible] paign against imperialist war the America[illegible] Fascism formulated, in August 1936, a [illegible] which read in part:

> "The High Contracting Parties, the Amer[illegible] and Fascism and the——— do solemnly de[illegible] belief that the imminent danger of war now [illegible] be warded off by tireless and united action [illegible]

In comparison with this verbiage about [illegible] between high contracting parties" (with [illegible] Nations), the People's Council for Demo[illegible] which plagued us before America entered [illegible] revolutionary.

Misleading The Negr[illegible]

At the National Negro Congress, held [illegible] under the ideological aegis of the C.P. an[illegible] milestone in the history of the race, we f[illegible] most elementary principles of the struggle [illegible] tion and its by-products. A resolution on "[illegible] bers of the Congress that:

> "WHEREAS, the development of sound [illegible] ness is most indispensible to the general elev[illegible] and economic security, therefore be it
>
> "RESOLVED: That all Negroes conside[illegible] to support Negro business by their patrona[illegible]
>
> "RESOLVED: That Negro leaders shoul[illegible] duty to set the example of patronizing Ne[illegible] and be it further
>
> "RESOLVED: That the business and c[illegible] communities inaugurate a systematic prog[illegible] the Negro population to the necessity of [illegible] enterprises." (*Chicago Defender,* February [illegible]

On the same plane with this road to Neg[illegible] proposed by this Congress towards the c[illegible] the struggle:

> "We recommend that under Divine Le[illegible] various activities of the church, the Negro[illegible]

> inspiration and assistance in his marvelous progress and advancements. We still feel that the Negro church is the most potent agency to be used in the further progress and advancement of our people. We therefore recommend that the Negro shall continue to hold faith and confidence in God and the church, as set forth in the life examples of Jesus. . . .
>
> "The power of the gospel is supremely needed in a time like this. . . . "

There can be no doubt that the approach used at this Congress is an inevitable by-product of the People's Front strategy. The same approach was broadcast by Earl Browder in a radio interview in Hartford, Connecticut, on October 6, 1936, when he declared that: "The Soviet Union divorced the church from the state and established *the American system in these relations.*" (Browder's emphasis)

After studying this approach to the class struggle and its inevitable effect on the mass of workers, one wonders to what Comrade Browder referred when he recently reminded the Central Committee of the Communist Party that :

> "After the Seventh Congress we said that the far-reaching and world-shaping consequences in the People's Front strategy would become clear only as they unfolded themselves in the life of the people of the world." (*Daily Worker,* December 14, 1936)

Election Campaign

By weighing the value of the work of the Communist Party in terms of this approach Browder concluded: "Now we must add that the elections in the U. S. in their own and different ways also confirmed the correctness of the Seventh Congress decisions." The "successful" role of the C.P. was based on the assertion that: "The Communist Party, necessarily conducting an independent campaign, was the most active, loyal and clear-headed leader of the whole camp of labor, progress and peace." And the role of the party was reduced to a new low:

> "Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people, in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. And we must say that the results of the election showed more than we ever saw before, the possibility of achieving this." (*Daily Worker,* Dec. 14, 1936)

If perchance anyone is not clear as to the import of these statements, one more quotation from the same speech should suffice:

> "Without exaggerating our role in bringing about this result (the defeat of Landon, J. L.) we can safely say that the weight of each individual communist in the struggle was far higher, many fold, than that of the members of any other political group in America."

A self-indictment of the first and worst order for any communist to make!

In the election campaign Comrade Browder made the "defense of democracy" the central issue. The party convention in June 1936 adopted an election platform which made it doubly clear that it did not intend to raise the issue of socialism in this campaign. Yet, describing this purely reformist platform, the *Daily Worker* (June 25, 1936) could only say: "They lay down the planks over which 130,000,000 will march eventually to a free, peaceful, prosperous and happy America." It is in this spirit that Comrades Amter and Powers recently appealed to the "Neighbors of the 10th A.D." in New York City: "For a Happy and Prosperous 10th A.D. Vote Communist."

Small wonder that Upton Sinclair could declare in the *Sunday Worker* of September 20, 1936: "I was interested to know that Browder's platform, set forth in a leaflet, dropped upon my front porch a couple of days before his meeting, was for all practical purposes EPIC. . . . I have never been much concerned about labels, and if the Communists want to boost for EPIC under another name it is all right with me." Not a word of disagreement with or criticism of this article (which was so proudly hailed) has yet appeared in the *Daily Worker* or any party organ.

Undermining The Labor Party

From this there is little distance to the suicidal People's Front conception of a labor party as entertained by the C.P. today. Winding up his disastrous presidential campaign, Browder told a New York audience on November 2, 1936, about "that broader unity of all progressive people, of the tens of millions in the Farmer Labor Party which will enable the people to gain control of their government, to build a bulwark of peace, freedom, happiness and prosperity for the whole population."

If all of this can be secured through a farmer-labor party, then, why should anyone want to join or support a communist party? And why be for socialism if all these good and best things humanity now dreams of can be gotten without a revolution and under capitalism? Surely, Comrade Browder and his colleagues would not want us to conclude that the socialist society could be achieved through capitalist parliamentary democracy. We hope not, but this is the logic of the People's Front.

The labor party is the first historical progressive step on the part of American labor towards its separation, politically, from the bourgeoisie on a national mass and class basis. But, today, the Communist Party considers the labor party as synonymous with the People's Front. Instead of considering the labor party as a force for sharpening class alignments, for making class lines more clear, for ending the classless myth of "the people," the Communist Party is approaching the labor party in such a way as to make it a means of confusing class divisions and diffusing proletarian class-consciousness—to the point of disappearance. This is crassly illustrated in a leaflet on the labor party question issued by the C.P. of Paterson, New Jersey. The leaflet, entitled, "On Guard," says in part:

> "Democratic Mayor Hinchliffe and Republican Board of Aldermen and Freeholders must be made to help keep industry in town. But not by the Labor Relations Board that put the burden on workers through wage cuts, increased speed-up and union-busting. The present administration must be forced to reduce water charges, power and light costs and abandon its favoritism in taxation. If sufficient pressure is brought to bear upon them, this can be done. *But a strong Labor Party can be relied on to carry on such a program and protect the interests of the workers, business men, and entire population.*"

Let no one think that this is a local, accidental slip. The *Daily Worker* announced to the world editorially, on Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1936, that *"A Farmer Labor Party—of trade unions, MIDDLE CLASS and Negro people and ANTI-FASCISTS —is the correct way to carry out the real American traditions championed by Washington."* Not everyone who is for capitalism is for fascism. Not everyone who is against fascism is against capitalism. There are plenty of good, bad and very bad capitalists who are against fascism and are perfectly satisfied with bourgeois democracy as the state form to be maintained, as the type of capitalist class dictatorship to prevail. What business have such forces inside a labor party which is to be a distinct proletarian class party?

What business? There is no mystery to it, for Comrade Browder, in estimating the election campaign and its ensuing problems for the American section of the Communist International, unashamedly tells us:

> "There is a pressing need for permanent relations between the Farmer-Labor Parties that now exist and between them and progressive groups inside the old parties. We will have to take up the detailed problems of how these broad progressive movements can participate in the primaries of the old parties on a local and state scale, and organize the fight of the progressives against the reactionaries in the primaries." (*Daily Worker,* December 14, 1936)

Yes, and by 1940, if the People's Front strategy continues in force at that time, the C.P. will be facing the task of participating "in the primaries of the old parties" (Republican and Democratic) not only "on a local and state scale" but on a national scale as well.

Certainly, Comrade Browder, as long as the People's Front course is pursued, the C.P. will not be able to overcome the condition you complain against—a condition in which "our lower units showed a tendency to drift and become the playthings of spontaneous development, instead of taking charge of this development and directing it to a conscious goal." (Browder before Central Committee Plenum, December 4, 1936)

Some Canadian Products

Keeping this non-revolutionary approach in mind, it is not difficult to understand how the *Daily Clarion,* central organ of Canadian official communism, could recently declare editorially: "We Canadian workers love our unions and political parties and will not permit them to be annihilated as were those of our German and Italian comrades." We reckon that ex-Premier Bennett and now Premier King could well join a People's Front to save at least some of the political parties in Canada.

On Christmas Day this party's Central Committee rang People's Front bells with "Hearty Season's Greetings to all comrades of our party and to all friends and supporters of the movement for peace, democratic maintenance of civil liberties and progress towards a better life."

In line with such efforts to wipe out working class-consciousness, the Toronto organization of the Canadian Communist Party had, as its 1936 election campaign battle cry, the slogan: "Our Home's in Danger!" Paid C.P. advertisements in capitalist papers treated the Toronto wage workers to such lessons in working class militancy as: "Be it ever so humble there's no place like home". "Fewer people own their homes in Toronto today than ten years ago. High taxes, high mortgage interest, and hard times have robbed them of their dearly bought protection."

Dearly paid-for votes indeed, for a party which was founded to inspire, educate and organize the working class to fight for socialism!

People's Front in England

In England, the Communist Party, through its secretary, Harry Pollitt, sought to arouse the British miners, steel workers and seamen over the fascist onslaught in Spain by applying the People's Front strategy:

> "The honor of all democratic forces is at stake. Men and women in the streets, fields, and mountain fastnesses of Spain are defending democracy with their lives. . . .
>
> "The people of Spain are not fighting to establish Soviets or the proletarian dictatorship. Only downright lying scoundrels or misguided self-styled 'Lefts' declare that they are—and both combine to help the aims of the fascist rebels.
>
> "The struggle in Spain is for the maintenance of democracy and *a free Constitution in a country whose economy is still backward in character and whose institutions until recently were autocratic and feudal in character.*" (*Daily Worker,* August 6, 1936—Our emphasis)

These are the hackneyed, redigested arguments flung by the Mensheviks against Lenin and the Bolsheviks, when Kerensky was at the head of a government with "a free constitution in a country whose economy is still backward and whose institutions until recently were autocratic and feudal in character." Or, perhaps, the Pollitt of the People's Front has in mind the great British constitution and British democracy for India and the depressed areas when he gets so feverish about "the destiny of the British people being worked out in Spain. . . ."! One is tempted to remind him that Lord Beaverbrook, Macdonald, Baldwin, Chamberlain, and Churchill, and Sir Henri Deterding are also included in the British people—as well as hundreds

of thousands of other parasites and their tools and lickspittles.

In reality, Comrade Pollitt, as an experienced fighter in the class struggle, knows better than to peddle such tripe and (pretend to) get enthusiastic over it. But that is the way the Comintern apparatus works today.

Once in a while these comrades, in despair, ask themselves embarrassing as well as self-incriminating questions. Thus, we find the London *Daily Worker* of August 19, 1936 breaking out in a front page screamer: "Spanish People Defend Democracy With Their Lives Against Foreign Fascist Bombers and Black Troops. *But Still Democratic Governments Dilly Dally With 'Neutrality'.*" It is significant to note how quickly even communists take over enemy class ideology when they adopt anti-working class positions. Would Pollitt be less irritated if the troops fighting the Spanish militiamen were not "black"?

In line with this position an actual attempt was made to launch a British People's Front in London last December. The inaugural demonstration was at the Friends' House. John Strachey was there for the communists. A canon of the Church of England was on hand as a speaker. A Churchillian Conservative Member of Parliament, Robert Bootby, and the Liberal M.P., Richard Acland, took their places at this "front." G.D.H. Cole put in his lick for Labor. Bootby thundered for "neutrality" in Spain. Acland cried that "we have no time *today* to conduct the battle of the workers versus the bosses." Hence, he was the real embodiment of the spirit of the People's Front for "peace, order, democracy, freedom, progress, prosperity, and happiness". But Cole turned over the applecart—and with this, the first British People's Front organization adventure—when he insisted that the "British National Government must be brought down."

In practice, as well as in theory, the People's Front is diametrically opposed to the most elementary interests of the working class struggle in Great Britain. Glaring proof of this is offered in the latest pamphlet. "Hitler and the Empire", by James Turner. This is a Lawrence and Wishart publication. This firm is like the International Publishers in the United States. Its imprint stands for the English editions of the Marx, Engels and Lenin works, as well as for all official Soviet publications. In this pamphlet, we are told, on the basis of the People's Front theory:

"There is one aspect of the development in Germany . . . which ought really to rouse the nation, and which really should unite every class and group in England: that is the great danger that Hitler's Germany presents to the Empire. . . . *If in this way I succeeded in bringing home* to people reading this booklet exactly what Hitler's Germany means to every British man and woman, then, I shall feel that I have at least achieved something on behalf of England and the Empire."

A Swiss Mess

The People's Front has worked havoc in the Swiss Communist Party. On a request of the reformist trade union bureaucracy, the Central Committee of the C.P. saw fit to declare "that all previous decisions in regard to communist trade union fraction work are herewith annulled." Thus, communist, or revolutionary, work in the unions was given up in order to have a broader front for "democracy"!

And a few months ago, the Swiss party was so anxious to become an integral part of a so-called People's Front, that its press hurriedly announced the official communists' acceptance of "the directives for economic reconstruction" worked out by this motley aggregation. The first point of the program provided for "unreserved espousal of democracy; rejection of all connection or collaboration with any and all anti-democratic organizations and movements." In its "declaration of indorsement," the C.P. Secretariat emphasized that:

"It recognizes these directives as the basis for gathering of all people's forces that are ready to work together for the development and improvement of the living conditions of the people, for the defense of Swiss democracy, for the independence of the country and for the defense of peace."

Forthwith the social democratic press replied to the above:

"Surprisingly enough, the first of all groups to be heard from was the Communist Party of Switzerland, professing 'unreserved espousal of democracy and a positive position on the military defense of the fatherland as the immutable foundation for a re-orientation in policy.' To the extent that the Secretariat of the C.P. takes its utterances seriously, this means the dissolution of the C.P., which had until recently been advocating the dictatorship of the proletariat and had rejected national defense of a bourgeois state. Both principles have now been thrown overboard. The only thing that now remains for the section is to leave the Third International in order to fulfill the complete turn. Or did the Secretariat of the C.P. merely read directives and overlook political implications? In that case, there are some surprises in store for them."

And the Labor Committee which worked out these directives stated that "the loyal cooperation (of the C.P.) will be rejected at the very outset."

Humbert-Droz, leader of the Swiss section of the Comintern, thereupon, wrote an article entitled, "The Communist Party, Democracy and Defense of the Nation" in the *Freiheit* of October 14, 1936, in which he says the following:

"We communists are of the opinion that socialism cannot be realized without democracy. Thus wrote Lenin: 'Socialism is impossible without democracy. Victorious socialism cannot maintain its victory and cannot bring about the disappearance of the state without the fullest realization of democracy'. Why cannot we therefore subscribe fully to point one of the directives: Unreserved espousal of democracy? We go even further than this formulation which only speaks of democracy in general without stating whether it is bourgeois or soviet democracy. We are willing to defend *Swiss democracy* as it has been delivered to us down through the ages.

"Someone will ask about the dictatorship of the proletariat. What person in Switzerland is thinking of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat?"

Only as late as June 1936, the Swiss Communist Party conference rejected the armament credits demanded by the Council. But since then matters have taken a different turn. Humbert-Droz further wrote in the above mentioned article:

"In the present European situation, the defense of the independence of Switzerland, the safeguarding of its freedom, is part of the international struggle against war and fascism. The C.P. is, therefore, ready to defend this independence of the Swiss commonwealth and to approve the necessary means for assuring it."

At its conference in June, the C.P. spoke of "conditional defense" and set up all sorts of "conditions." Today, even these "conditions" have disappeared and have been replaced by hundred-percent chauvinism. It is sad but true that the People's Front course leads, at a dizzying pace, to a break with the basic principles of Marxism, with the fundamentals of Leninism. Sooner rather than later, the People's Front ideology permeates and poisons all that is vital to the pursuit of the revolutionary class struggle.

IV. THE TEST IN LIFE: AFTER THE FASCIST VICTORY—BACK TO BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

THE same false line of alliances with bourgeois groups is proposed for those countries where fascism has already triumphed (Germany, Italy, Austria). Here the aim of the People's Front is to restore bourgeois democracy.

Back to Weimar—In the Third Reich!

The Communist Party of Germany is in a totally helpless position today. Savage persecution by the fascists is not the only reason for this tragic state of affairs. Now that the Nazi regime finds itself in a desperate economic crisis, the C.P. has practically ceased to function even as an underground organization in Germany. The suicidal People's Front course, imposed on the C.P.G. by the E.C.C.I., is responsible in no small measure for this costly impotence. As far back as November 1935, the International Communist Opposition warned against such an eventuality when it wrote to the Comintern:

> "The leadership of the C.P.G. has, during and since the Congress (Seventh World Congress), advocated the false and illusory conception that the fascist German Labor Front could, in its lower units, be transformed into an instrument of class struggle and that the rebuilding of class trade unions could be carried out within the framework of this fascist Labor Front. (Speech of M. Fuchs at a trade union conference during the Seventh Congress, reported in Internationale Gewerkschafts Presse Korrespondenz No. 17-18). Such a policy not only furthers dangerous illusions about the character of fascist organizations but also hinders any effective work for the creation of class trade unions. Under the present conditions in Germany such trade unions could be built up only as illegal cadre organizations; the tactics proposed by the C.P.G. make it impossible to observe the rules of conspirative work which are necessary for these organizations.
>
> "Furthermore, the C.P.G. seeks to form a so-called People's Front with Liberal and Catholic bourgeois groups and considers the struggle for democratic rights for all as the central task of the anti-fascist struggle in Germany. The C.P.G. propagates the convoking of a national assembly on the basis of general popular suffrage after the overthrow of the Hitler regime and the formation of a People's Front government with eventual participation therein by communists. This course for the restoration of bourgeois democracy, of the Weimar Republic in Germany, must lead the C.P.G. to being dragged along by the social democracy and must make it incapable of fulfilling its historic role as the organizer and leader of the mass struggles of the workers, struggles which alone can prepare and bring on the destruction of the fascist dictatorship, as the leader of the struggle for soviet power."

Can it be that nothing has been learned thru the experience in Germany where capitalist democracy has been completely wiped out and where the working class has paid so heavily for its delusions about bourgeois democracy! With stern logic has this apotheosis of the People's Front led to an advocacy by the C.P.G. of "national reconciliation." We cull from a recent Open Letter of the Communist Party of Germany to German Catholics:

> "We (the communists) ask you to recall the slogans of the struggle for democratic rights in 1918, the joint general strike during the Kapp putsch. . . . We ask you to recall the defense of democratic traditions through the efforts of the Center Party of Southern Germany and the slogan of Wirth 'The enemy is to the right'. We hope that German Catholicism is ready to revive these progressive traditions in the struggle against Hitler in collaboration with anti-Hitler forces and thus restore *the honor and dignity of the German people.*" (Our emphasis)

Such words are frowned on today in the ranks of even the militant Catholics in Germany because they know how the Wirths and their other political leaders have double-crossed and betrayed them. And what exactly is the "dignity of the German people"? Is it the dignity of Hindenburg or Luxemburg? of Liebknecht or Ebert? of Scheidemann and Thyssen or Marx and Mehring? How heroic a role did prelate Kass really play in the showdown fight against fascism? Where was Bruening when a flock of emergency decrees were rushed through by his Center Party government? What about the game played by this "scholar in the black cloth," this towering monument to the fraudulent policy of the "lesser evil", when Hitler's "enabling act" was jammed through the Reichstag, and the Center Party voluntarily

closed shop—that is, committed suicide gracefully for Hitler's convenience?

The leaders of the People's Front have learned nothing. They still pursue the self-destructive course of seeking alliances with any groups which are less evil than those directly dominated by Hitler. This is proven by a recent manifesto issued by the Central Committee of the German C.P., entitled, "For the Reconciliation of the German People":

> "The Communist Party of Germany replies by calling for the reconciliation of the anti-fascist and National-Socialist masses. . . . The vital interests of the German people demand that the non-National-Socialists offer a brotherly hand to the National-Socialist masses in order that, instead of hatred, there should be confident cooperation in the fight for peace, freedom and well-being. . . . " (*International Press Correspondence,* Vol. 16, No. 48)

The lengths to which this policy has led is to be found in an appeal of the Communist Party which rejects an unequivocal struggle even against the National Socialist Party:

> "The appeal of the Communist Party of Germany calls upon the German people to stick together, to take the National Socialist leaders at their word, to enforce the realization of those former demands of the National Socialist Party which are in the interests of the people." (*International Press Correspondence,* Vol. 16. No. 48)

This, from the party that was once the party of Liebknecht and Luxemburg!

Another People's Front For Italy

For communism, these are policies stranger than the weirdest fiction. The tragedy, however, lies in the fact that the same theory and practice flower in the Communist Party of Italy.

> "Only the brotherly union of the people of Italy brought about by the *reconciliation of fascists and non-fascists* will be in a position to break down the power of the bloodsuckers in our country. . . . "

According to the *International Press Correspondence* (Vol. 16, No. 48), this dedication continues:

> "Let us reach out our hands to each other, children of the Italian nation, fascists and communists, catholics and socialists, people of all opinions, and let us march side by side to enforce the right of existence of the citizens of a civilized country, as ours is. We have the same ambition—to make Italy strong, free and happy."

Another quotation:

> "Workers and intellectuals, socialists, democrats, liberals, catholics! Use all your endeavors for the reconciliation and unity of the Italian people, for the creation of a People's Front in Italy. The present rulers in Italy wish to keep the Italian people split into fascists and non-fascists. Let us raise high the banner of unity of the people for bread, work, liberty and peace!"

The manifesto actually says that the Italian Communist Party is prepared to take as the basis of the People's Front the fascist program of 1919:

> "We proclaim that we are prepared to fight, together with you and the whole Italian people, for the carrying out of the fascist program of 1919 and for every demand which represents a particular or general and immediate interest of the workers and people of Italy."

The manifesto concludes: *"This is the appeal which the Italian Communist Party addresses to you, the party which is fighting to make Italy strong, free and happy."*

In Austria

In mangled little Austria, where the workers displayed inspiring courage in resisting the Dolfuss fascist putsch, the Communist Party applies faithfully the People's Front line by attacking the Revolutionary Socialist Party for its slogan, *"Down With Schuschnigg."* Here the People's Front spokesmen stress: "We will wage the struggle against Hitler *not only with the anti-fascists,* but also together with all anti-National Socialists." Fortunately for the C.P. von Papen will not permit it to get very far with this game.

In the same vein, the Austrian C.P. desperately begs the workers: *"We do not want to say anti-fascist,* but anti-National Socialist—and think ourselves thereby to be anti-fascist."

This time we assume the "strategy" of the People's Front is to

get Schuschnigg to help the C.P. fool him! We know of nothing more harmful to the Austrian workers than concessions to, or any kind of partnership with Schuschnigg on the ground of inducing him to fight against Hitler or National-Socialism.

If there be any question about this, then, let Alex Schoenau be consulted. In *International Press Correspondence,* Vol. 16, No. 24, he tells how the C.P. is doing its "utmost to bring about an agreement *of all forces* prepared to defend peace and independence of the country against fascist barbarism, against the plans of the agents of Hitler and Mussolini." Such a policy can only play into Schuschnigg's hands. It is apparent, that the People's Front demands that the workers make a choice between the clerico-fascism of Schuschnigg and the Nazism of Hitler—with Schuschnigg as the lesser evil!

V. THE TEST IN LIFE: WHERE FASCISM FIGHTS FOR POWER

IN a number of countries the fascist movement has assumed serious proportions in its battle for power. In varying degrees, fascism menaces the workers in these countries. Symbolizing different stages in this war on the working class—a war which is even now in progress —are Czecho-Slovakia, Spain and France. In Czecho-Slovakia the Henlein Party of Hitler fascism and other fascist groups of Czecho-Slovak hue are becoming increasingly aggressive. In Spain, the battle has already reached the stage of open civil war. In France, the fascist movement has assumed tremendous proportions. Let us see how the People's Front has served as an instrument in the struggle against fascism in these countries.

Czecho-Slovakia

In Czecho-Slovakia, we have another citadel of "purest" bourgeois democracy menaced by fascism—from within and without. German refugees are being hounded. We find a press censorship. Even the German social-democratic refugee paper, *Vorwärts,* has recently been seriously circumscribed, in order to appease Hitler. Here, the C.P., with its reformist traditions, is an easy prey to the People's Front, a vigorous partisan of its strategy. The leadership of the Czech C.P. has become thoroughly social-patriotic and the party is openly accepting bourgeois democracy and the capitalist state. No longer does the C.P. fight for the Leninist slogan of self-determination for the national minorities within the country; it now stands for "a democratic compromise and the brotherhood of all nations." This is no Christmas greeting. It is an all-year-round party appeal.

To confirm our estimate of what the People's Front strategy has brought to the C.P. for Czecho-Slovakia, we cite from the report which has appeared in the *Rundschau,* No. 19, April 23, 1936:

> "The communist deputy, Dolansky, declared that Gottwald himself was the author of the resolutions passed by the Party convention. These resolutions, which he read to a very attentive audience, contain

the categoric position of the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia on the question of the defense of the Czech republic at all cost against German, Polish and Hungarian fascism. The C.P. of Czechoslovakia is, however, opposed to the proposed bill in principle because it is quite inadequate for the defense of the republic against fascism; because its anti-working class and anti-people's character and the power vested in the reactionary bureaucracy make effective defense of the republic quite impossible. The communists will therefore propose a fundamental change of the bill when its discussion comes up so as to make it acceptable to the workers.

"Sverma, another communist deputy, emphasized the determination of the communists to defend the republic against the Third Reich." (P. 777)

Can anyone be surprised, therefore, when the Polish miners in Czecho-Slovakia, hitherto followers of the communist banner, have, in recent months, been deserting it? Surely, there is no mystery to be attached to the loss of votes suffered by the Czech C.P. in the recent factory elections.

The last convention of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia went so far in its application of the People's Front line as to dissolve the Young Communist League. It transferred mechanically to a capitalist country what is correct for the young generation in the Soviet Union, from the viewpoint of the growing trend towards a completely classless society in the U.S.S.R.

In place of the Communist Youth League for the German section of the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia, there was organized the German Youth League. A leaflet recently issued by the leadership of this new German Youth League shows that in this there was involved more than a mere change of name. Rather was it an attempt to create something entirely new. This leaflet declares, in part:

"Our strength lies in the unity of the youth. In the unity of the youth lies the guarantee for our people achieving a free life. In these fateful and critical hours, we appeal to the youth in the German district *under a new banner.*

"Youth, be united, united, united for your nation, for the things that justly are due to youth—for justice, freedom and peace!

"In order to achieve this goal we are creating a league which is *to unify the entire youth and all its organizations into one mighty force,* the German Youth League of Czecho-Slovakia.

"Itself non-partisan, this league is to include the *entire* youth who want to struggle for the great ideals of our nation—justice, freedom and peace. Comradely understanding, the desire to work together for our nation is to be the leit-motif of our work.

"We want to help the triumph of a *new idea* in the world, the idea of happiness and freedom. . . . We want justice for the youth and its rightful place in public life, in the state and in the management of affairs. . . . Let every opponent know that we are no cowardly weaklings, but *rather that we will defend, together with all the nationalities in Czecho-Slovakia, our peace and our hearths. . . . Every nation has a right to freedom and free development.*

"Comrades, boys! Comrades, girls! We want to be that youthful force which will intervene with a firm hand in the fate of the youth and turn it for the better. Our program is the program for a happy youth. Our program is the unity of youth."

In form, if not in substance, in words, if not in deeds, the above appeal is almost identical with the appeals of the Nazi Youth leader, Baldur von Schirach, before Hitler took power in Germany. We underscore the fact that we differentiate the motives, but the effect of such an appeal on the young class-conscious workers can be only one of confusion and demoralization. And on those lacking in class-consciousness it smoothes the way for the inculcation of fascism.

The Communist Youth League of Czecho-Slovakia has consequently burnt its old program and its old banner and has raised in its place a new banner. It has replaced the class struggle with the idea of a community of interest in the nation, the People's Front. According to this program of the German Youth League, there no longer exist class differences inside of the ranks of the youth. There must be a union with the youth *in general,* and with *all* youth organizations. Karl Liebknecht's anti-militarism has now become worthless for the youth. This new program replaces anti-militarism with the defense of the fatherland and internationalism with nationalism. The *"new idea"* of the German Youth League reveals itself to be only a threadbare notion taken from the counter of miscellaneous articles long used by the ruling class to hold young workers in subjection. And this is now offered as the program of the People's Front to the young sons and daughters of the working class.

Civil War In Spain—Towards Proletarian Revolution

In Spain we have the first and most serious struggle for proletarian revolution since the 1917 days in Russia. It is necessary for us to register the impressive solidarity and inspiring heroism of the Spanish

toiling masses—socialist, communist, anarchist, syndicalist and members of the P.O.U.M. (Workers Party of Marxist Unity). Here, there are being worked out for the proletariat of the whole world new contributions to the strategy of civil war. Daily, it is becoming clearer even to the most politically undeveloped that only with revolutionary weapons can the workers and peasants defeat the bestiality of the decadent and desperate ruling classes of yesterday. There is unfolding in Spain a classic, dramatic translation into life of Lenin's theory of the process of transition from bourgeois democratic revolution to proletarian revolution.

The mighty struggle against Spanish fascism and its Hitler-Mussolini staff and mercenaries is a life and death combat between the toiling masses on the one hand and fascism as the unifying force of feudal and church ranks with big sections of the bourgeoisie on the other. The defeat of fascism can be achieved only through taking over all factories and industrial production as well as the expropriation of the big landowners. This means working class revolution—regardless of and despite the People's Front. It is already clear that, in spite of the C.P. and the S.P. in Spain, despite the pressure of the Second and Third Internationals, there is to be noted a marked trend toward the development of dual government. This is evidenced in the spread and growth of the workers' comittees and the anti-fascist militia. The constant shift in government composition towards the left further emphasizes the complete lack of confidence enjoyed by the originally selected "People's Front" government, as the military struggle sharpened. Here is the real import of the emergence of the Caballero cabinet.

In the struggle against the fascist butchers, the bourgeois democrats in Spain played the role of the Girondins. They delayed, desisted, compromised. Naturally, from them one could not expect decrees for the actual division of the land, for self-determination of Morocco, or for workers' control of production. Under their very eyes, and without resistance, the fascist bandits prepared the bloody attacks they have since launched. In spite of the incalculable injury done to the workers through such inanity, the inveterate right social democrat, John Powers, hails the work of the People's Front government of Spain:

> "The victory of this coalition (in Spain) emphasizes once more the efficacy of cooperation between progressive and socialist parties, the policy which has brought such salutary results in all democratic countries, *where it has definitely halted the advance of fascism, checked the elements of political, social and economic disintegration and kept the road clear for socialist progress.*
>
> "It is obvious, however, that the victory of the republican-socialist coalition, which is the substance of the People's Front, can be maintained only on the basis of continued cooperation of the progressive and socialist elements. . . . The communists are bringing up the rear." (*New Leader,* N. Y., February 29, 1936)

Revelation by Comrade Diaz

How unfounded was this talk of "victory," can be seen in a confession by Comrade Joseph Diaz, leader of the Spanish C.P., published in *Le Populaire* of September 8, 1936:

> "The Azana regime—the legal government born of this victory—began to apply this program. But it was very hesitating and vacillating in its actions, because of its 'petty bourgeois' composition—and both socialists and communists were forced to denounce them more than once. We pointed out the necessity of taking all necessary measures for removing the economic and social base of fascism, and that, unless this were done, the government would be impotent in the face of reaction.
>
> "The workers' parties insisted all the more since they had had a previous sad experience. The incident in question is the period after April 14, 1931 when the Republic failed to act decisively and thus brought the reactionaries back into power. Those were the two 'dark years' in which all the gains of the workers and the democratic rights of the people of Spain were wiped out.
>
> "Our experience enabled us to concretize the danger.
>
> "And that is, that fascism could not triumph except through the military. The prime necessity was, therefore, to purge the army of all seditious officers. We put pressure on the government (the People's Front government—J.L.) to carry out this demand. Unfortunately, the latter did not realize that it would have to make sweeping changes instead of limiting itself to a shifting of officers if a catastrophe was to be averted. We remembered the siege of Sanjurjo and lived under the constant danger of a military coup d'etat.
>
> "Then came the putsch of July 18th which surprised no one. Preparations had already been completed before the elections, particularly during the time that Gil Robles was Minister of War. They were reinforced and intensified after the elections. The church put its influence and treasury at the service of the fascists, as did the financiers, particularly the notorious March, and the large landowners.

"Despite the seriousness of the situation, the formidable strength and systematic preparation of our enemies we never for a moment lost faith in our victory. Our hopes were inspired by the heroism of the Spanish proletariat in 1934 and we were thoroughly acquainted with all the aspects of the situation.

"Thanks to the heroism of the socialists and communists, they were defeated. The workers, very badly armed, carried the rebellious garrisons by storm. There they found more arms and immediately started a counter-offensive. They drove the fascists into the Sierras where they stopped the army which was converging on Madrid. They sent columns to aid their comrades where the rebels were in power and freed Alcada, Henares, Getafe, Toledo, Guadalajara, Albacete.

"The rebels expected to conquer Spain in a few days."

The Real Struggle

Here is remarkable hindsight. Yet, let no one fail to see here the emphasis on the role of the proletariat and on the cowardly game of the petty bourgeoisie and other liberal capitalist forces included in the People's Front. But, despite this almost instinctively correct reaction as to what had happened, *Mundo Obrero* of Madrid, central organ of the Spanish C.P., continued to prate about bourgeois democracy. While fascist artillery was thundering, it declared:

"We are convinced that the People's Front in our country will not leave the bounds of the defense of the Republic and democracy. We have occupied the fascist buildings and newspapers but that does not mean that we want to appropriate capitalist property."

It would appear that the C.P. adhering to the People's Front was concerned lest the proletariat and the peasantry should begin to legislate for themselves and "go too far"! Similarly, it must be said that the first phase of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union towards Spain was dangerously false. Neutrality was nothing but a hoax of the German and Italian fascists, of Britain's Portugal, and of all the bourgeois governments throughout the world, to help the fascist rebels. When the U.S.S.R. dropped this game and started to render some aid to the Spanish masses, the People's Front mask was somewhat pierced. Events began to move more and more to the left in Spain, the world bourgeoisie were somewhat scared, the international proletariat was inspired, and the day was saved. Madrid was snatched from the jaws of the savage fascist hordes.

But if the official communists and socialists did not see, or refused

to see immediately the class implications of the fascist onslaught in Spain, the capitalists the world over were not so blind or ostrich-like in their political approach. Thus, we find the *N. Y. Herald Tribune* of September 5, 1936, giving the People's Front adherents a lesson in elementary political strategy and class consciousness:

". . . For nearly two months a group of 'progressive' republicans in Madrid, with no very impressive following among any section of the population, have been endeavoring to preside over a fierce civil war in which they have been compelled to rely for the actual fighting upon a proletarian and mainly revolutionary militia. There was a gallant attempt rationally to ride the whirlwind; it has now been defeated by military pressure and the logic of the situation into which Franco's mutiny forced them. Of all the crimes with which both sides have stained their hands, the greatest still seems to be the original crime of the reckless generals who left a fairly moderate and essentially democratic government with nothing but the revolutionary masses of the Left for its defense."

Here is quite an understanding of the class forces by our enemy. We must not fail to recognize it. We also must strive to understand. Otherwise, we are lost—in spite of the best weapons and the highest courage. It would be well not to forget that the moment the fascist generals sounded their alarm for revolt, the People's Front government became so scared that the Quiroga cabinet resigned to give place to the more reactionary Barrio cabinet which included the semi-fascist Sanchez Roman. This short-lived attempt to mollify the fascists did not silence the heavy artillery of the Francos and Molas. What made an impression on these butchers were not the swings towards more conservative capitalist regimes, but spirited military and revolutionary action by the armed workers and peasants.

Fate of People's Front Government

The People's Front government of Spain has died. In its original and essential form it is no more. Should the fascists be crushed, the workers and peasants who shall have won the victory, will certainly not surrender their gains, won at so high a price on the field of battle, to the "democrats" and the "republicans," that is, to a restoration of capitalism and capitalist class rule. In saying this, we do not for a moment minimize the damage that the Comintern and the Socialist

International have done and can still do through their false policies.

And if the fascists should win because of aid from both the fascist and democratic international bourgeoisie, and because of mistakes made by the labor forces in Spain and inadequate aid from the international proletariat, then bourgeois democracy is likewise finished—and with it the People's Front. Today, no one can challenge the fact that the People's Front in Spain was unable to prevent a fascist uprising under its very eyes and nose. The People's Front government in its pristine form and as sole government was unable to conduct any sort of resistance to the fascists once they attacked. The People's Front and its government cannot survive the bitter civil war in Spain, regardless of its outcome and no matter which class is victorious.

What the Comintern Seeks to Forget

In 1933, when class relations were not so tense, when the class war was not so acute in Spain, the Comintern evaluated the struggle in terms of the choice of: "Either fascism or dictatorship of the proletariat." The Communist International declared:

> "In the leading article of the Brussels *Peuple,* of December 10, Vandervelde attempts to cloak the defeat of his social-democratic friends in Spain. In doing so, however, he lets slip the following admission:-
>
> > *'In those countries where the post-war revolution has not made a thoroughly clean sweep of things, as it has, for instance, in the Soviet Union, we see that the dead branch of the old regime is putting forth fresh buds beneath a fascist racial or nationalist husk. That is happening also in Spain, the last country in Europe with an absolute monarchy, and one must have forgotten everything that has happened elsewhere, namely the revolution of 1848, or the year 1918, in order to imagine that it could have happened otherwise.'*
>
> "M. Vandervelde thereby admits that the choice is between the dictatorship of the proletariat or fascist revolution. It follows, therefore, that he who does not decide in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat *consciously* promotes the cause of fascism.
>
> "It is hardly necessary to say that the whole of Vandervelde's article is devoted to defending the Spanish social democracy, this most bitter enemy of the dictatorship of the proletariat, this stirrup-holder of fascist reaction." (*Imprecorr,* December 15th, 1933, p. 1242)

One need not accept in full this ultra-leftist denunciation of the

Spanish social democracy as "this stirrup-holder of fascist reaction," to see the essential soundness, the correctness in principle inherent in this Comintern estimate. And only three years later the American C.P., discarding the Leninist conception of the state, describes the civil war now raging in Spain as a conflict between bourgeois democracy and fascism:

> "Not only in Spain, where the people are defending their democratic government with arms, is the issue fascism versus democracy. In our country, the forces of reaction (as Mr. Babson admits) find that the preservation of democracy is not at all in the interest of the money changers." (*Daily Worker,* editorial, August 31, 1936)

The terminology, the identification of the enemy and the ideology used by the C.P. leaders of the People's Front in the U. S. A. are all borrowed from Mr. Roosevelt to draw an analogy between the United States and Spain. For a kindred and crude expression of the Comintern policy we can turn to Comrade Dimitroff's New Year appeal for 1937:

> "The victory of the Spanish people over the fascist reactionaries and fascist interventionists, as well as the realization of *a solid republican, parliamentary democratic regime which is based on the People's Front* (emphasis, Dimitroff's) will undermine in a decisive manner the material and political foundation of fascism in Spain." (*Rundschau,* Vol. 6, No. 1, January 7, 1937)

We find it extremely difficult to believe that Comrade Dimitroff really would have us forget that "a solid republican, parliamentary democratic regime which is based on the People's Front" is, nevertheless, not a Soviet state, and is, therefore, a bourgeois state, representing and defending the most fundamental interest of the bourgeoisie as a class—the preservation of the capitalist system. We find it equally hard to convince ourselves that Dimitroff actually would deny that the material basis of fascism is anything but capitalism in decline. Obviously, until one is determined to end the bourgeois state and to abolish capitalism one is unprepared to tackle the job of extirpating the material and political roots of fascism.

It is clear that the entire People's Front line of the Comintern is in open and violent contradiction to the elementary principles of Marxism and Leninism. Or shall we conclude that Stalinism, as the Marx-

ism of the epoch of People's Frontism, holds that the bourgeois democratic state instead of (or as well as) the proletarian dictatorship can serve as the instrument through which socialism is to be achieved? At the last All-Russian Soviet Congress, Stalin said the opposite. The new Soviet Constitution is a glowing refutation of such a theory.

A Fatally False Estimate

Throughout the Comintern, because of the People's Front line, there was a totally false reaction to and estimate of the struggle in Spain. When we underscore this we do not for a moment deny or belittle the heroism of the communists fighting along with other workers in Spain; not even for a fraction of a second do we underestimate the significance of the Soviet aid given and being given today; nor do we overlook the solidarity between Spanish workers and communists throughout the world—many giving their lives on the battlefield. What we have in mind is the undoing and undermining of these positive factors by the negative, destructive consequences of the People's Front line of the Comintern, borrowed from the ideology of social democracy.

A painfully crude expression of what the People's Front line leads to is to be found in the maneuvers of the Comintern section in Catalonia to exclude the P.O.U.M. from the government in order to insure the continuation of bourgeois democracy and capitalism throughout Spain. The all-inclusive or expansive policy of the People's Front which has room for bourgeois groups of every political tint, at the same time finds it necessary, under the direction of the Comintern, to exclude a revolutionary group in Catalonia such as the P.O.U.M. The People's Front thus subjects itself to all and sundry pulls from the right but to none from the left.

Nor can we overlook the silence of the People's Front adherents in Spain on the question of complete autonomy for Morocco. Why does it merely talk of "democracy in Morocco and in the other colonies"? Since when are the communists silent on the question of colonial freedom? And why? It is no accident that the French C.P., scared by the Spanish events, has proposed a further extension of the People's Front into a French Front, in order to give more concessions to the French bourgeoisie and thus make it undesirable (very likely unnecessary) for them to resort to the tactics of the Franco-Mola combination.

Fortunately, even the French Socialist Party rejected this proposal for a "Front Français," or enlarged People's Front, which was to include all Frenchmen "who, without their accepting all of the domestic policy pursued to date, are willing to defend the independence and freedom of our country." On this basis, the new People's Front would include some of the parties representing the "two hundred families"! And this from the model party of the Comintern! This from the cradle of the People's Front strategy!

France—Land of the Model People's Front

Since France now has the strongest Communist Party, the model organization of the Comintern, it is important to see how the French People's Front has worked out in life. What do we learn from the application of the People's Front line in France? What of the experience with the People's Front government headed by Blum, backed by Thorez, and hailed by the entire Comintern? Let the leaders of the People's Front speak for themselves, through their own organs.

Whatever accusation one may make against the proponents of the People's Front strategy, one cannot charge them with lack of appreciating the importance of their doctrine. For instance, we find Comrade Tim Buck, general secretary of the C.P. of Canada, telling us:

> "The victory of the People's Front in France was one of the most important events since the glorious victory of the heroic soldiers, workers and peasants against Russian Czarism in November 1917. Beside changing the relation of forces in Europe, it has brought the French people as a whole appreciably closer to the concrete question of state power." (What We Propose, p. 31)

Some of these claims are far, far from the facts; others are exaggerated; and still others make pretensions to a condition diametrically opposed to the very situation generated by the "People's Front victory." It is a fact that the Franco-Soviet pact to which Comrade Buck refers as "changing the relation of forces in Europe" is not a child of the People's Front government. It was conceived by Barthou, reared by Laval (Laval-Stalin communiqué of unpleasant memories), and recognized by Blum.

As to the "state power" claims of Buck, let us turn to a first-hand source of inspiration. At the eighth convention of the French Communist Party, Thorez said:

"Some people say and write that the People's Front is nothing but the old cartel of the lefts with the communists participating in it. Nothing could be further from the truth. The cartel represented a section of the working class which was forced to become the tail-end of the bourgeoisie. The People's Front, on the other hand, is an organization in which the working class influences and forces the toiling masses of the middle class to fight against fascism and capitalism."

This seems to be plain talk. The People's Front is a movement not only against fascism but also against capitalism as such. So says Thorez, the general secretary of the C.P. of France, and member of the Presidium of the Comintern. We will see how much there is in this. Would Thorez have us believe that although the Radical Party was a mere bourgeois clique when its alliance was only with the Socialist Party, it changed as soon as the C.P. entered this alliance, and together with the Daladiers, Herriots, Chautemps became "the toiling masses of the middle class"? Very likely, on the basis of this reasoning, Herriot is the worker and Daladier is the farmer in the People's Front!

"Almost a New Social Order"

And Premier Blum declared on October 11, 1936 that now "almost a new social order" had been established in France! Very likely it is on this ground that Jacques Duclos had been led to say in behalf of the C.P.:

"We intend to defend in the realm of foreign policy, as well as in all the other fields, the program of the People's Front, for whose practical working out we have supported, are supporting and will support the government. . . . This program is that of the government over which presides our comrade Leon Blum. As for us, this program is our law and as far as we are concerned everything must be done to put it into practice. We know too well that if the popular masses were disappointed in their legitimate expectations, fascism would profit by their disillusionment. . . . " (*L'Humanité,* September 24, 1936)

This sacred vow becomes pregnant with tragic import when read together with the purpose for which it is made, as expressed by the same comrade in *L'Humanité* of June 27, 1936:

"The Radicals are right when they declare that in adhering to the People's Front they wanted to realize a national union capable of facing the menace which weighs on us from a neighboring country's war-loving leadership.

"This preoccupation is in fact identical with the one that pressed us communists to struggle for the union of the French people, for a France free, strong and happy, whose destiny will be worthy of her glorious past.

"The Radicals are right when they declare that they refuse to accept any threat against private property, and we communists do not hesitate to proclaim that this is equally our own anxiety, in adding that what threatens property today is the powerful economic domination of the 200 families against which we strengthen all our forces.

"In summing up, the Radicals are right in recalling that the reforms which the parties of the People's Front have agreed upon are on the whole only the reproduction of the old program of the Radical Socialist Party."

How different are these sentiments from those expressed by Thorez at his party convention when he had to sell the People's Front to the delegates! That the program of the People's Front never was actually anything else, despite the poetry of Blum and the fiction of Thorez, was made clear by Eduard Daladier, President of the Radical Party, in the honeymoon days of this movement when he told the world:

"In the program of the People's Front there is not even a trace of anything about a capital levy. One will not find in it even a word about a broad system of nationalization. In reality, it is animated by the desire to gather the greatest possible number of Frenchmen for the defense of the democratic freedom, for the organization of a genuine and lasting peace, and for the revival of the economic life." (*L'Oeuvre,* May 16, 1936)

In this same programmatic article, Daladier, practical politician that he is, lets a bit more slip when he says: "I am convinced that if the French Radical Party had not joined the People's Front, its losses in the elections would have been even more serious." But time marched on, and the People's Front marched ever backward, as can be seen from the following admission by socialist Minister of Finance, Vincent Auriol, on September 15, 1936, during the Lille textile strike:

"It has never entered our mind to requsition anything. The Popular Front government will not seek to overturn the present social order. It will carry out its program within the capitalist system."

This declaration was capped with an appeal to the striking workers and to all working men and employers to coperate unselfishly. Once upon a time only reformists spoke in this vein. Today, however, on the basis of the People's Front, we have the communists talking the same language, thinking the same thoughts, and acting in the same manner. Duclos assures the French "people" that "we (communists) do not want any social conflict; we do not want to have one part of France pitted against another."

"There Can Be No Question of Class War"

After some verbal criticism of the foreign policy of the Blum government, especially in regard to Spain, Comrade Thorez hastened to assure all of France, on October 30, 1936:

> "We are determined to do everything for the People's Front because the People's Front represents the union of the working class and the middle class. At present there can be no question of class war; the present problem is to defend democracy against fascism. But the People's Front must not be merely a parliamentary coalition. It represents mass action reflected in Parliament and in the government. The People's Front must be a coherent thing. That was why we showed great moderation last June in restraining the strikes."

What a pitiful jumble! What a self-indictment! "At present there can be no question of class war," and we engaged in "restraining the strikes"—what language and actions for a communist! We vividly and painfully recall such words and deeds on the part of the Kaiser socialists during the last war.

Small wonder that at the very outset, experienced bourgeois observes could sense the extent to which the C.P. had surrendered to the Right:

> "What has been most remarkable is the moderation of the communists who seem fully to realize they do not form a majority but must work not only with the socialists but with the Radical Socialists. Even their suggestions for a form of capital levy are comparatively mild." (P. J. Philip, *N. Y. Times,* May 8, 1936)

So it naturally came about that Comrade Racamond, an outstanding C.P. leader in the French trade unions, was not ashamed to say in *L'Oeuvre*: "The entire capitalist press condemns the C.G.T. on the ground that it has provoked the strikes. This is the very opposite

of truth." To emphasize his loyalty to the People's Front in the face of the rising strike wave, Comrade Racamond even went so far as to complain that "there is danger that the movement will develop to a point in conflict with the general interests of the country."

But even the best of comrades, once they adhere to the People's Front, simply cannot see the difference between black and white. For example, Arthur Horner, president of the South Wales Miners' Federation, in trying to sell the idea of a People's Front in England, draws the following fantastic conclusions in regard to the French experiences:

> "The difference between a People's Front and a Liberal-Labor coalition is this: A Liberal-Labor coalition means that the middle class forces have assumed the leadership of the working class, that the working class has become once more what it was in the last century, a mere ally or appendage of the middle class. A People's Front built on the rock of successfully achieved working class unity means, on the contrary, that the middle class has come under the leadership of the working class. It means that the working class has begun to fulfill its historical mission of leading society as a whole out of the terror and agonies of imperialism. For the present fight for peace and liberty must necessarily be led by the working class; that fight is (and this will be more and more clearly seen as it develops) a fight against capitalism as the essential parent of fascism and war." (Towards a Popular Front, pp. 9-10)

If this were true, then, it would also be true that Daladier is following the lead of Thorez in a fight against capitalism! Likewise, if there were a grain of truth in this Horner fantasy about what has happened in France, then Thorez and Blum would not have to be restraining strikes and postponing or abandoning the class war against big capital. In the face of incontestable facts, one must conclude that every claim made by Horner for the People's Front, as distinct from the Liberal-Labor alliance or the old social democratic "Cabinet-Socialism," is but one more example of wishful thinking or deceptive special pleading.

If Horner had listened to the broadcast by Premier Blum to the French people on New Year's Eve, he would have heard his comrade say:

> "Do I need to repeat again that ours is not a socialist government, and that we do not seek either directly or insidiously to in-

stitute a socialist program, but that we are working with entire loyalty within the framework of existing society under the present regime of property, and that our ambition is to extract from these institutions and from this regime all that it is capable of producing in the way of order, justice and welfare, and that we are resolved to pursue this necessary task within the limits of the republican legality and if it is possible by common agreement of all social ranks."

In deeds, the C.P. and the S.P., despite some demagogic leftward twists of the latter on certain occasions, have gone out of the way to stop the class struggle, to blur class-lines, to kow-tow to hostile class elements, to absorb and spread outright enemy class ideology. For instance, the Communist Youth organ, *l'Avant-Garde,* of May 3, 1936, has seen fit to proclaim Joan of Arc as the "Daughter of the People—heroine of national independence." Mirabeau, monarchist conspirator in the days when many of the bourgeoisie were fighting as revolutionists, has "won his place" on a C.P. election poster entitled, "Let the rich pay." The word unity seems to have become a fetish for the French communists. It's unity, unity with anybody and everybody—that's all that matters, we are told.

Kow-Towing to Papal Hierarchy

The French C.P. seeks unity even with the Catholic Church. At one Paris demonstration, there were carried in the C.P. section some slogans and sketches which did not meet with the approval of Monsignor Roland-Gosselin, Bishop of Versailles, who denounced these as "sacriligeous parodies." In a jiffy, *L'Humanité* carried the following statement on September 24, 1936:

"The C.P. wants unity. The Secretary of the C.P. has learned of a few photographs that have been taken and reproduced in some newspapers. Among them one is perhaps likely to shock the feelings of the Catholics who, in addition to being loyally devoted to religion, want the unity of the people of France—and they are waiting with a brotherly hand stretched out.

"Therefore, the Secretary of the C.P. will not tolerate any such gestures which the extremists of our country would be only too happy to use in their criminal attempt to divide the country.

"Our slogan is UNITY!"

It is not unlikely that it was this declaration which inspired the communist municipality of Vitry to invite officially the inhabitants

of the town to a religious service commemorating Armistice Day.

For A National Front

If this approach inherent in the People's Front is persisted in for long, the working class of France will pay a ghastly price. Through this attitude the vitality of the proletarian movement is sapped. The masses cannot be taught social-patriotism and at the same time be prepared for the revolutionary struggle. The teachings of the People's Front blind the workers to their real problems. We need but cite from *L'Humanité,* August 23, 1936:

"The great idea of a 'French Front' as proposed by Comrade Thorez in the name of our French Communist Party is going well. In the meanwhile, all who would like to see our country divided into two camps for civil war, all who want the nation divided so that it may be overcome more easily by attacking foreign powers, these are the people who oppose the 'French Front'. But for all they do or say, they will not be able to prevent the actual realization of a concept that is unconquerable because it is rooted in the heart and mind of every French citizen who cares about the interests and future of his country. . . .

"The platform is short and clear: 1. Defense of national economy; 2. Security and independence of France; 3. Respect for the republican law.

"Who but the declared enemies of our people would refuse to accept these three points?"

Let us turn to a few representative headlines in *L'Humanité,* now the biggest organ of the People's Front. On April 24, 1936, we were front-paged: "For Order, Vote Communist"; on June 5th—"Through Order, For Bread"; the next day—"Order will assure success"; June 14th greets us with "The Communist Party, that's order"; and on the twenty-first of the same month a seven column streamer proclaims "Long live the unity of the French nation!" On a par with these excursions into the realms of social-patriotism is an outbreak by Vaillant-Couturier in *L'Humanité,* July 19, 1936:

"We are simply what we have always been, we are realists. . . .

"The national spirit in us is natural, since we consider ourselves the continuers of France. . . .

"The notion of the fatherland is developed in the heart of the working class—when the workers become conscious of the fact that

they are liberating themselves from political and economic oppression.

"In the same way, the results obtained by the working class give them guarantees and means of new action which, with the support of the People's Front, can give them more and more frequently victory without necessarily having recourse to strike action. . . .

"The communists do not abandon by a hair their position. We are nationalists, as we are internationalists, *because* we are communists."

This chauvinist approach is not a matter of individual taste. That it represents the party's position in the light of the People's Front can be seen from the following declaration by the Secretariat of the C.P.:

"The reactionary press quotes disobliging remarks of persons who abhor the Tricolor of Republican France.

"The C.P., which considers it its great task to reconcile those who hate the Tricolor flag of our fathers and those who hate the red flag of our hopes, is certain that such remarks do not emanate from communists.

"Our party, desiring the unity of the French nation into a free, strong and happy France, knows what the Tricolor means in the history of the people of our country and knows, too, that the popular masses see in the Tricolor the emblem of liberty." (*L'Humanité*, June 30, 1936)

In the bosom of the Tricolor there is room for *all Frenchmen* on the basis of the equality of the People's Front; no one can be for the People's Front without, therefore, indorsing such oft-repeated remarks of Duclos as the following:

"We do not want to see in France the events that are developing in Spain. . . . Today, the main problems for the Frenchman concerned with the future of our country are the maintenance of order, the defense of our national economy, and the security of our nation. . . .

". . . and further we think that the defense of our national economy will assemble energies until now unharnessed and conflicting and will do away with all arbitrary divisions within the nation. . . ." (*L'Humanité*, August 25, 1936)

Blum's New Year message told us what "our national economy" is in the France of today. As to what the "arbitrary divisions" in this "national economy" of French capitalism are, we might refer to the *Communist Manifesto* for enlightenment. We do this even at the risk of being told that Marx is out of date because "conditions

have changed." Nevertheless, such travesties on Marxism do not arise in a vacuum. They are rooted in a distortion and perversion of a great truth. It is true that communism is anti-fascist to the core. But communism is more than that. Not every anti-fascist is a communist and not all anti-fascism is communism. To make communism as a movement synonymous with anti-fascism means to give up the revolutionary struggle. This means giving up the entire struggle for communism. Here, we have the real import of the remarks of Thorez on the occasion of the establishment of a two-year military term of service in Germany. He said then: "We must maintain peace and for this the whole of France must stand firm and united before the adventurers who seek war." What "firm and united" mean to the leaders of the French C.P. the Central Committee of the Communist Youth sets forth in its address to the National Committee of the Socialist Youth:

"In this struggle for Peace, Bread and Liberty, we do not want to exclude any youth groups. We hold out a fraternal hand to young Catholic workers, as well as to National Volunteers whom the de la Rocques and Doriots would turn violently against the people and the republic.

"We know no enemies in the ranks of laboring youth and we work with all our might to realize the Union of French Youth, this splendid and generous youth, to which the glorious traditions of the past dictate the imperative duty to unite with the people, to combat the representatives of the old world who dream of bringing into France, a bestial dictatorship.

"For the life and future of youth, for the independence and security of our beautiful country!

"YOUNG FRANCE, FORWARD!" (*Le Populaire*, September 20, 1936)

This is the way the French communist youth is being prepared to defeat, to crush the fascist gangs! It is more than tactics that are involved here, important as these are. What is involved here is a serious challenge to the whole philosophy of communism. This much we can gather from the following astounding statement by Duclos:

"The French Front can and must be the expression of an alliance between men who are divided by numerous political opinions; it must broaden the unity of the population. . . .

"We want the unity of Frenchmen for the safety of our country,

but we do not want the 'Gleichschaltung' of Hitler. . . . We do not want a Hitlerite Prussianization of France. . . . Nor do we want the methods of Mussolini, of cruelty; and if there is anyone who believes that we are hiding something and that what we want is to imitate Moscow, we can answer very easily.

"The Russian experiment, which has proved itself, which has led an immense country out of chaos and ruin, to make it a country of emancipated labor and of mankind free from servitude, was achieved under the conditions of economic and political life prevailing in Russia.

"None amongst us would take it into our heads that the course of political events in France must necessarily follow an analagous course. No, it is the conditions of French life that will rule France —the harmony of political, economic and social problems posed before us. . . . " (*L'Humanité,* August 15, 1936)

Little comment is necessary about this "harmony" in France. The tragedy lies in the rise of the communists as harmonizers to create the appearance of harmony between classes which does not and cannot exist under capitalism unless it be completely at the expense of the working class.

Long Live the Republican Army!

Fully in line with this attitude is the July 18, 1936 declaration of the Political Bureau of the C.P. that it notes "with satisfaction that from the Invalides to the Concorde, the people of Paris have saluted the army which will become every day more and more the army of the Republic. . . . " Concomitant with this declaration came the letter of Maurice Thorez to Adolf Hitler to the effect that:

" . . . the people of France intend to live in good friendly relations with all the countries without exception, but that they will know how to oppose with an unshakable resistance any and all the plans against the integrity and dignity of France which, under the leadership of the People's Front, marches towards prosperity, well-being and happiness."

And while emphasizing on June 29, 1936, that it does "not doubt the republican loyalty of General Gamelin," chief of staff of the army, *L'Humanité* is compelled on July 3rd to complain and say " . . . We don't understand M. Daladier very well. Before the Commission of the Army . . . the Minister of War has shown himself

hostile to the circulation in the army of the People's Front press. . . ." Poor communists! They don't understand Daladier "very well"! What a complaint and a confession! Obviously, they are acting as if they had forgotten what understanding of class forces means.

The socialists of France are, of course, continuing an old policy in their application of the People's Front. Their central organ, *Le Populaire,* September 25, 1936 sheds more light for us, as to how this "grand army of the French democratic republic" behaves towards the government of the People's Front—towards the government elected by the majority of the voters, headed by a "comrade," and supported by communists. Thus runs its complaint against the "democratic" treatment accorded the press of the People's Front:

" . . . This right, alas, is hardly recognized (in the army). Complaints come to us from everywhere. We know that in many places, soldiers suspected of having advanced ideas are bullied by their chiefs. These, when they cannot punish them openly for their opinions or political sympathies, are constantly on the lookout for the slightest misstep in the training, sometimes even provoke it, to have a pretext to punish.

"We know also that the entire press does not enjoy the same rights in the army camps. Where inequality arises, do not imagine that it is brought about by formal orders. One does not forbid such and such reading. But one manages to make life so difficult for those who read it, that they give up the 'misinformed' newspapers, or else fall into some trap of misconduct, and so furnish their chiefs with the 'motive' for punishment which these awaited."

The next day the same People's Front organ announced on its first page that "a reserve soldier is punished with a 45-day prison term for singing the Internationale." The poor soldier! It would appear he took the People's Front promises seriously. He should not have forgotten that Thorez said: "At present there can be no question of class war," and that even the theme-song of the workers' struggle must be silenced, if not forgotten.

This "fine" army which is so highly esteemed by the socialists and, of late, even by the communists, is commanded by a crowd that knows how to mishandle the workers coming to it as recruits in regular service. From *Le Populaire* of September 28, 1936, we learn that J. B. Severac has received a letter from "the father of a young soldier who is doing his service in an Eastern garrison" and who bitterly complains:

> "It's almost a month since our sons have left for the regiment. . . . Their letters are unanimous, whether they come from Metz or from Agneseau or any other place. . . . They all say the same thing: 'We are badly fed. They starve us. It is difficult, very difficult."

It is this army which the S.P. and the C.P. cheered and cheered and cheered on Armistice Day for the last two years with "Long Live the Republican Army!" Unfortunately for the workers, this ruling class instrument, the army, with its present fascist commanders and the Weygand Croix de Feu followers at the helm, with the spirit of the "republican Marechal Petain," who appealed for the Croix de Feu in the last elections, permeating it thoroughly, will "live" and grow as long as the People's Front lasts and until such time as the revolutionary proletariat is strong enough to disrupt it and replace it with a Red Army.

People's Front "Frees" the Colonies

One of the first tasks of this "republican army" is to protect the colonies—first of all against those to whom their land and resources rightfully belong, the great mass of their inhabitants. Furthermore, should the class war in France sharpen, despite the People's Front, we may be sure the French fascists will seek to use the colonies and their military outposts as a base from which to direct their assaults against the French toiling masses. Even at this early date, *L'Humanité* is able to supply us with plenty of evidence that this is the idea entertained by the French fascists. Its issue of July 24, 1936, presents us with the following from the fascist weekly *Candide,* dated July 23, 1936: "If in France we must bear the tyranny of the People's Front to the dregs, to revolt, who can say if the movement for liberation will not come from North Africa?"

Let no one imagine, however, that the party directing *L'Humanité* which thus exposes fascist machinations in the colonies, as a result, is taking any measures to prevent their success. Quite the contrary. As a result of the People's Front, the C.P. has been forgetting not only its past glorious anti-militarist traditions but also its revolutionary position towards the colonies and the colonial masses. We turn to *L'Humanité* of July 25, 1936—just forty-eight hours after the *Candide* threat:

> "What do our comrades in Syria demand? Their most ardent wish is to live in fraternity with the France of the People's Front. They want to tighten the bonds which unite them to France. They want collaboration with it, to preserve the people from the curse of war and fascism. They accept the task . . . to consecrate their forces to this salutary task. . ..
>
> "In order that this Franco-Syrian collaboration may be realized, there must be stopped without delay the actions of the fascists who, in spite of the victory of the People's Front in France are always, thanks to M. De Martel, the masters of Syria. A Franco-Syrian mutual aid pact must be concluded without delay. The elementary democratic requirements of the Syrian people must be assured.
>
> "Such are the demands of the C.P. of Syria. They are strictly in accord with the interest of peace and the interest of France. We want to believe *that for these two reasons they* (the Syrian communists) *will have the approval of the government which came into power through the victory of the People's Front."*

Gone are the days when the communists agitated for complete freedom for the colonies—immediate, unconditional self-determination! With the People's Front this would be impermissible; it would mean the end of the People's Front; the Radical Party would not stand for it for a fraction of a second. What is more it would not be in line with the general agitation for "Order and respect for law" and would be "in violation of the integrity and dignity of France."

Damming the Great Strike Wave

So far we have examined primarily the effects of the People's Front on the attitude and policies of the working class parties; we have turned the spotlight on what the People's Front strategy has brought about in the ranks of the organizations of the class-conscious workers. Now let us see what the government has done for or against the workers, whose parties brought into life and are responsible for its existence and continuation. Let us see to what extent Thorez was correct when he told us, "France . . . under the leadership of the People's Front marches towards prosperity, well-being and happiness." Let us see whose France and what France is marching in this direction. When the workers, flushed with victory in the elections and thinking that their election successes were to be but the beginning of a big drive to improve their conditions, occupied the factories in June 1936, the newly organized People's Front government was stunned. The Radicals were scared; they had not expected it. They soon turned to their People's Front partners for aid. The latter did their best to

satisfy the Radicals, who in this instance represented the basic interests of the entire bourgeoisie and of capitalism as a system.

At first, Thorez spoke of the occupation of the factories as "a new legality." That was well done. Daladier soon forced him to retract and retreat. The communist Frachon, co-secretary of the General Confederation of Labor, hastened to proclaim in *L'Humanité* of July 13, 1936:

> "In the period of full effervescence we have had the courage to say that one must know how to end a strike. The workers have heard us. We repeat today with the same frankness that the prolongation of strike agitation, that continuing the occupation of the factories, would not help them. . . .
>
> "The occupation of the factories is not the only way to strike—and striking is not the only way to obtain satisfaction. . . . "

It is interesting to note that this appeal by the communist Frachon was necessary even after the declaration of the then socialist Minister of Interior Salengro, on July 7, 1936 before the Radical Party-dominated Senate, to the effect that: "The government intends to oppose henceforth all occupations of shops, offices, shipyards, factories or farms." But the proletariat of France, noted for its great spontaneous revolutionary actions, still did not take too seriously these threats and implorations. Defense Minister Daladier took his turn at thundering on September 20th: "It is . . . indispensable to put an end to these endlessly renewed occupational conflicts, which would end by disorganizing production and trade and also by gravely compromising national defense."

To the eternal credit of the French proletariat be it said, that it did not listen to Thorez when he told them "One must know how to end a strike," when they were first starting to deal their hardest blows against the employers. Still, the People's Front "governors" had the impudence to claim credit for the gains won by the workers through their mighty strike movement, to praise themselves for having put on the statute books certain social laws which the workers forced their employers to grant through widespread, effective strike action. M. Frossard put the truth about the occupation of the factories correctly when he declared in the Radical Party organ *L'Oeuvre*:

> "The occupation of the factories . . . that is an effective weapon of struggle for the workers which shortens the duration of the conflict in that it forces the bosses to negotiate forthwith. Without this weapon, the social laws would perhaps not have been approved today. One can cry against it, prohibit it, condemn it as illegal, but the workers would not drop it."

And Frossard is myriads of miles away from a truly left position in French politics!

It was not long after the employers had been forced to grant these concessions, that they began to counter-attack, with the help of the Radical Party directly and with the aid of the other People's Front parties less directly and indirectly. They have sabotaged the Matignon agreements wrung from them as a result of the June strike wave. Rapid and sweeping price increases soon cheated the workers out of a large share of their wage increase. Afterwards, came the devaluation of the franc to hurt the workers again. The government, under pressure of the Radical Party representing the capitalist interests, backed down on the original proposal of Blum to reduce partially the ravages inflicted on the workers' wages by inflation. Blum's proposal for a sliding wage scale arrangement to accompany the devaluation of the franc was buried by the Radical Party share holders in that great swindle concern parading as the People's Front government. Recently, the government has used force to dislodge Paris workers in a food strike. With the votes of the socialists and communists, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, adopted a compulsory arbitration law and a press censorship act. Both of the latter were "sold" as pro-labor enactments. It won't be many months before the working class will pay through the nose for these People's Front gifts.

And the government of "Comrade" Blum, in appreciation of the service rendered by the C.P., compelled the party of Thorez and Duclos to reduce its scheduled meetings in Alsace from 122 to 10—on pain of total prohibition. What painful memories of the Bruening cycle!

Public Finance For Better Business

The entire public finance policy of the government has been openly pro-capitalist. Finance Minister Auriol was frank enough when he said: "It is by helping trade and business that we expect to add to the resources of the state and thus to balance our budget. . . . We will try our best to bring all selfish impulses under the mutual law of national interest." (*Le Populaire,* August 21, 1936). In order to

allay the worries and suspicions of the Paris Bourse, Comrade Auriol went on to tell the Stock Exchange crew on September 15th that: "Our first task will be to lighten the fiscal burden on dividends, which has been made inordinately heavy . . ." Where are the deeds to meet at least some of the countless promises and pledges to impose a capital levy, as made by the C.P. and the S.P., and in a limited measure even by some sections of the Radical Party, before election day? Let there be no misgivings. With the C.P. in the People's Front, Thorez will not call upon the workers for action despite his recent recognition that "the rich do not want to pay, and unfortunately, there is a beginning of retreat before them."

The noise made by the People's Front champions about the reform of the Bank of France and the "nationalization of the armaments industry" isn't worth its weight in hot air. The reorganization of the Bank was long ago recognized as a necessity for French capitalism, in the interest of overcoming one of its most archaic administrative features. Yet, the very first declaration made by the newly appointed People's Front Governor of the Bank of France was to the effect that the new council of the bank "will help the workers understand that some of their demands must fail." (*N. Y. Times,* August 19, 1936).

Nor is it an accident that in compensating some of the munitions makers for "nationalization" the government of the People's Front agreed to pay them far more than was due on the basis of what their shares brought on the market at the time of "nationalization." This led some employers to apply to have their plants "nationalized" in the same profitable way. . . .

In the light of the above it requires little effort to comprehend a report of the estimate and reactions of the Paris Bourse appearing in the *N. Y. Times* financial section of September 21, 1936:

> "Blum and Auriol Buoy Paris Bourse"
> "Policy on Strikes Hailed"
> "Financial Circles Pleased That Textile Peace Basis Indicates Care For Employer Welfare."

Are not the several hundred thousand good-sized employers in France part of the French people? And are not the French people, with the possible exception of the "200 families," all to be united to preserve "their glorious culture" and "the dignity and integrity of France"? Now we can understand what Thorez meant and why he

said, in *L'Humanite* of July 12, 1936: "All those who wish sincerely for the return of prosperity will rejoice at the happy results of the program of the People's Front, and will do everything to develop it. . . ." The Communist Party has given itself over to the "organization of prosperity" instead of to the organization of the class struggle.

"Dissolving" The Fascist Leagues

In spite of all these facts, there are some who may say: "Well, but the People's Front has stopped fascism and cleaned up the fascist forces in France. Isn't this worth everything?" This is a falsehood elevated to a grand illusion, through the medium of a Comintern instruction. We have already seen what has been responsible for checking the fascist advance in France to date and how the People's Front subsequently facilitated the progress of reaction. Now for a consideration of some concrete measure and legal enactments against the fascist leagues. Even Laval was for such legal measures "in principle" in order to have the support of the People's Front Radical Party for his cabinet. These laws "against the fascist leagues" were finally adopted in the days of the stop-gap Sarraut cabinet. *They are all so worded as to be usable against the Communist Party when and if it returns to a revolutionary position.*

After the adoption of these laws, the Croix de Feu reorganized itself, changed its name to the "Social Party," became a political party with an underground military apparatus. It continues to have excellent connections with the army officers and general staff and to pile up secret hoards of arms. While the People's Front press is forbidden, Fascist organs like *Gringoire* and *Candide* circulate freely in the ranks of the army, stationed in the fortified regions facing Hitler Germany (*L'Humanité,* January 6, 1937). It even resorts to brutality against militant labor and farm organizers, wherever its organization needs demand it. The central organ of the reorganized Croix de Feu, directed by Colonel de la Rocque, is called *Le Flambeau.* The latter brazenly calls for defiance of the laws requiring the dissolution of the leagues. In a most taunting manner, *Le Flambeau* prominently features on its front page: "One does not dissolve the Croix de Feu. One follows it."

And still Comrade Berlioz declares: "Through the victory of the People's Front and through a big victory for the C.P., fascism has been defeated." (*Rundschau,* No. 20, p. 795). This is sheer self-

deception. One need but glance at *L'Humanite* and *Le Populaire* for day-to-day news reports about fascist outrages and activities to see how very much alive these bestial hordes are, despite the laws on the books against them. For instance, *L'Humanite* for July 4, 1936, cries bitterly: "The fascists, disrupters of France, insult us, menace us. We have but one answer to make to them: We want the unity of the French nation." Then, we are given details about Croix de Feu meetings "in cells, in private houses" and how "in spite of the law the 'Mobile Groups for Battle' are being armed." We are further told that in North Africa "blood flows every day as a result of the odious campaigns—anti-Semitic and pro-Hitler—of the Croix de Feu and Royalists."

A sad and serious situation indeed—as admitted by *L'Humanite*. So much so that the matter was handled by Comrade Thorez at a national conference of the C.P. on July 11, 1936. The next day *L'Humanite* reported Thorez to have stated the problem in the following terms:

> "We have held out our fraternal hand to the veterans who have become Croix de Feu, to the national war veterans, to all those who have allowed themselves to be abused by the demagogy of the Comte de la Rocque. What do they want? Like us, they want a France united and strong."

Time and again, but in vain, the C.P. has asked its People's Front government such questions as "Yes or no? Is the Action Francaise to be dissolved? Are we going to imprison those agents of Hitler at last? Are we going to suppress their paper?" On the basis of this typical information gathered from the C.P. press, it is clear that fascism is far from finished in France and that the People's Front government does more talking than fighting against the fascist bands.

Blum Continues Laval's Foreign Policy

Finally, the People's Front government has pursued an equally ignominious policy in the field of foreign affairs. Even Comrade Thorez has had to protest against the warm hand extended to Hitler's Schacht by Comrade Blum. This was a little too much for Thorez despite his going on a rampage of social patriotism as a result of the C.P.'s adherence to the People's Front. The conduct of the People's Front government's representatives in the League of

Nations when the British, seeking to woo Mussolini, attempted to unseat Ethiopia as a member of the Geneva congregation will long be remembered for its infamy. Describing this intrigue and conniving against Ethiopia, the *N. Y. Herald Tribune* correspondent, John Elliot, reported in his despatch of September 21, 1936:

> "Yet today Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, who twelve months ago was the originator of the League's sanctions campaign against Italy, and Premier Leon Blum, reputedly a complete idealist and a man called by some 'the Spinoza of French politics', were the ring-leaders in a bit of jugglery so contemptible that even a Tammany politician might have blushed to be connecter with it."

In fact, Blum's foreign policy has become so outrageous that it has aroused tremendous dissatisfaction throughout the labor movement. The blockade of Spain by the French People's Front government has aroused so much ire amongst the workers that the C.P. was compelled to criticize verbally, at least, this policy of the government and to show its disapproval by abstaining from voting for the government on one occasion. But except for its pouring out words, more words, and still more words, the C.P., fearing to break with the People's Front arrangement, has done nothing to force Comrade Blum to stop hewing so closely to the line of French imperialist interests. Comrade Peri described the Blum policy as "Back to Lavalism" in *L'Humanite*:

> "We, who are concerned with France and its government, do not hesitate to state that the situation which developed in the past two days is deplorable. We are not inclined to sharp criticism of those who are the leading figures in French politics and whom we support. Nevertheless, we must say that the past two days remind us strongly of the terrible days of Laval. The government is engaged in the same childish maneuvers and is yielding to force."

Comrade Peri should have told us to whose force his government was yielding. Would this "force" account for the communists' unanimously voting for Blum's proposal to ban volunteers to Spain? Such denunciations come with very poor grace as long as the People's Front policy continues. To be for the People's Front means to be for social chauvinism. The C. P. Political Bureau member, Marcel Giton, is so disturbed that he goes out of the way to emphasize in *L'Humanite* of August 29, 1936: "France and her allies, Poland

leading them, insist on effective security in Europe, by taking all necessary and possible measures against Hitler's base. . . ." In the light of this we can see the why and wherefore of the Political Bureau of the French C.P. proposing that Hitler's "Mein Kampf" should be "explained and commented on in all French schools, so that the French youth may know that the destruction of France is the fundamental task of Hitler's government." (*L'Humanite,* August 28, 1936). It is in line with this approach that Maurice Thorez wrote in *L'Humanite* of August 30th:

> "Long Live Poland! This morning there arrived in Paris the General Rydz-Smigly, General Inspector of the Polish Army and the most important person of his country. General Rydz-Smigly was the disciple and fighting companion of Marshal Pilsudski the founder of the now independent Poland who named him his successor.... The inner regime of Poland is rather distant from a liberal democracy and General Rydz-Smigly has at one time occupied Kiev and defended Warsaw against the Red Army. Nevertheless, we are not uneasy in addressing our greetings to France's eminent guest."

Since this song of praise for the Polish "Fuehrer" by Thorez, the C. P. deputies have voted for a loan of $65,000,000 to help bolster Poland's military machine.

The Confessions of a French Socialist

It will not be inappropriate to call upon Robert Dell, who has been a member of the French Socialist Party and an admiring friend of Blum for a long time to give us a composite picture of the People's Front and its government to date.

> ". . . In every European country where the S.P. had been in office it had failed. Would the French S.P. stand the test? . . . There was reason to hope that it would. Now, less than five months later, the failure of the government of the People's Front is patent, and the People's Front itself is in danger of disruption. . . . It is certain that one of the causes of the failure is that from the first Leon Blum had the radical millstone around his neck. But for that, one can hardly believe that he would have damped down the extraordinary wave of revolutionary feeling that swept over France. The movement was not revolutionary in its aims, but its spirit and methods were revolutionary.
>
> "So far as foreign policy is concerned, it is the weakest and most incapable government that France has had since the war. Its foreign policy has followed the general lines of that of Laval, with all the worst elements in Laval's policy accentuated. . . . The British Foreign Office has them completely in tow, and the real Foreign Minister of France is Sir Robert Vansitart. . . .
>
> "I deeply regret to have to say this, for I have known both Blum and Delbos for years, and for Blum, in particular, my feeling is one of affection. . . . " (*The Nation,* October 31, 1936, p. 518)

Premier Blum himself put it in a rather straightforward manner when he introduced us to the whole problem, to the very essence of the People's Front:

> "I have two duties, one to the party and one as head of the government to the national collective interest to which as a party we have contracted certain obligations. When these two loyalties conflict, I cannot any longer work for the interest of my country, without giving up my loyalty to party discipline and solidarity. Then I can stay in power. . . . I have something to add. This is not a socialist, nor a proletarian government. It is a coalition based on the contents of the People's Front. . . . "

This speech by the socialist premier at Luna Park on September 6, 1936, lets more than one cat out of the bag. It foreshadows serious difficulties for the French S.P. when the People's Front collapses. It really explains why the People's Front government has been so cool toward the U.S.S.R. and has been making so many efforts to court Hitler Germany. It reveals the class character of the People's Front and its government. It is a warning and should be an alarm call to all class conscious workers. "The national collective interest" is a very, very old rag. Terrific losses have been suffered by the workers everywhere as a result of labor organizations dancing to this tune.

Here is the secret let out by the Radical paper *La Republique*: "The generations of the future will have to be thankful to the C.P. for its considerable role in the constitution of the People's Front." (January 9, 1936). Albert Sarraut put it even more plainly when he explained at Rouen on January 2, 1937 why he no longer believes in the slogan he issued in 1927, "Communism, that is the enemy." *L'Humanite* proudly hastened to reprint on January 3, 1937, the following excerpts from a report of this address by Sarraut:

> "In 1927, the C.P. was carrying on an anti-nationalist and anti-militarist campaign and therefore deserved the judgment passed

> on it then. . . . But today, the C.P. votes for military credits, wants a strong, free and happy France, and has been working loyally during the last two years for the unity of the nation. . . . "

This Judas kiss by Sarraut inspires *L'Humanite* to add:

> "Yes, the C.P. wants the unity of the French nation against the Two Hundred Families; the C.P. will 'loyally' continue its work for this 'unity' through which fascism will disappear and the French people will be given liberty, peace and joy in their work. To achieve this, it is high time to proceed to the dissolution of the 'dissolved' fascist leagues and to put out of the picture their leaders who are enemies of the people."

This is the policy of the "lesser evil" which inevitably spells disaster for the working class, and for the great mass of the middle class as well. This is the real meaning of the Radical Party's Biarritz congress declaration condemning stay-in strikes "as an intolerable violation of liberty and of the declaration of the rights of man. . . ."

As long as the C.P. adheres to the People's Front in partnership with this out-and-out capitalist party, it will be a prisoner of that party and will, regardless of its best intentions, pursue a course harmful to the most vital interests of the workers as a class. We need but cite the recent vote of the C.P. deputies for the emergency decree seriously limiting the rights of the press—a step towards suicide.

VI. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

TO speak of fascist victory in France or any other capitalist country as a certainty, is utter folly. We underscore this despite the fact that decaying capitalism with its declining parliamentary democracy itself provides the soil in which this twentieth-century savagery sprouts. It is within the power of the working class, it is possible for the labor movement, to resort to a positive program to beat back and crush fascism. In such a struggle, the course pursued by the most class-conscious section of the movement of labor, the communists, is often decisive.

In our approach to the present false line of the Comintern, we are concerned solely with the fate of the entire working class—the only class that is historically capable of being progressive today. In this spirit we have made our criticism. It is in this spirit that we propose to show a way out—a different road. While our main emphasis here will be placed on positive tactics to be pursued in France, the essence of our practical positive approach is applicable to all bourgeois countries—with modifications necessary to meet the specific, concrete conditions prevailing in each country. Never must it be forgotten that while the principles of communism are international, the tactics applied to win the majority of the proletariat for these world principles must necessarily differ in each country on the basis of the differences in existing class relations.

A Program For France

In France, the C.P. should begin to turn away and win the working class away from the People's Front, so that there may be created the political and organizational prerequisites for shifting from the present policies of parliamentary bourgeois-democratic coalition to the field of determined extra-parliamentary struggles for immediate demands. Thus only can the workers and the situation be prepared gradually for revolutionary struggle for workers councils (soviets). Such a

shift implies dropping the idea that capitalist democracy can be used as the instrument through which fascism can be defeated. Such a shift inevitably leads to pitting proletarian revolution (socialism plus soviets) and not capitalism plus bourgeois democracy against fascist counter-revolution.

Obviously, this shift to the revolutionary position is not something that can be completed in one stroke. It is not something that can be shot out of a pistol with one trigger pull. A period of preparatory rising struggles is required. It is not a question of proletarian revolution in France today; it is a question of the course to be pursued: whether the conditions will gradually be prepared for revolution tomorrow or whether the working class will be so led as to be disarmed and robbed of its consciousness as a distinct class and the possibility for proletarian revolution even the day after tomorrow.

The focal point of immediate struggle is: to repell all attempts of the capitalists to shift the burdens of the crisis or the contradictions of the present economic system onto the backs of the workers. This defensive fight must gradually be developed into an offensive struggle to make big capital—and not labor and the lower middle class—shoulder these burdens. In France, this struggle is tied up vitally with the task of the physical disarming of the fascists. German, Austrian, Spanish and now French experiences show that this disarming can be achieved only through working class organization and action.

The workers must zealously be on guard against all attempts to reduce their own democratic rights. It is highly significant to note that in all bourgeois countries the capitalists of the liberal stripe have consistently put through the reduction of these democratic rights of labor through the plea that such a reduction (emergency decrees, etc.) is necessary to save the entire parliamentary system from fascism. Labor must never lose sight, as these experiences reveal, of the decisive difference between its fighting for its own right of organization, assembly, and press, and its fighting for the preservation and perpetuation of capitalist democracy as a system.

The decisive weapon of the struggle here is extra-parliamentary mass action which is not inhibited or limited by regard for the bourgeois state or concern for capitalist economy. Concrete actions of this sort must be adjusted solely to the strength of our own class, to the prevailing class relations. No serious defense of the living standards,

working conditions, or democratic rights of the workers is possible as long as the parties and organizations of the working class are tied up with the bourgeoisie in a coalition. We have seen time and again in country after country how the working class has been hampered in this struggle by the People's Front because the labor organizations are gagged and bound by concern for and responsibility to their bourgeois coalition partners. This tie-up makes it very difficult or even impossible for the proletariat to develop the necessary class consciousness or spirit of unity, inevitably engendered by the struggle for immediate demands.

What is more, it is only through such militant struggles against big capital that the petty bourgeoisie can be won as allies for the workers. In the present stage of capitalist economy no effective aid for the great mass of the middle class is possible without an assault against the big bourgeoisie and their economic base. This necessarily means that, especially in France today, the slogan of workers control of production must be raised vigorously and consistently. To give life to this demand, there must be built broad united front organs, inclusive of the factory committees and directly tied up with the lower petty bourgeois bodies—especially in the rural areas. The heart of this united front is, of course, to be found in the joint action of the S.P., the C.P., and the trade unions. Only such a firmly welded united front of the proletariat can effectively appeal to and work with some of the lower organizations of the Radical Party ready to revolt against the Daladiers, the Herriots, and the Chautemps. This united front movement has tremendous tasks to perform in the field of struggle against the dire hardships of devaluation faced by the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. This united front should organize the physical disarming of the fascist bands and not rely on the paper laws on the statute books. It must take the most vigorous measures for the lifting of the blockade against Spain.

Apparently, such a program involves the energetic revival of communist fractions working constructively in all the mass organizations. It entails setting up factory councils throughout the country coordinated on a national basis. No effort should be spared by the labor organizations in defense of the weapon of sit-down strikes or occupation of the factories. No energy should be spared in getting a repeal of the anti-strike law enacted by the People's Front government in the form of a compulsory arbitration act, so traditionally odious to

labor throughout the world. A fight must be made to replace the compulsory strike arbitration law with a law to compel the big bourgeoisie to make loans to the government for public works and for aid to the farm workers and impoverished farmers.

The French C.P. should take the initiative in organizing self-defense groups of proletarians against the consistently recurring fascist attacks. On the same basis, joint committees of workers, farm workers, and petty bourgeoisie should be set up to fight against the effects of devaluation.

The left forces in both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party should organize themselves to have their parties apply the strategy here outlined.

Once the Communist Party drops the People's Front, it will return to the fulfillment of its elementary duty of combining communist propaganda with striving for these immediate objectives. It will thus prepare the ground for revolutionary transition slogans and a struggle for the reorganization of economy on a socialist basis, for the ultimate aims of communism.

Towards a Sound Program in U.S.A.

In the U.S.A., dropping the People's Front would mean, first of all, a return to a sound attitude towards the labor party movement. Instead of chasing the tails of pacifist preachers and playing around with the Father Divine type of "liberators of the oppressed," the C.P. would throw its full energies into mobilizing labor in the struggle for a realistic social security program, for arousing labor to the dangers lurking for it in the sundry proposals for government interference with the trade union organizations.

Once the stifling People's Front psychology is discarded, its poisonous influence on the activities of Communist Party members in the trade unions will be ended. With the abandonment of the People's Front, the Communist Party members will cease giving support to reactionary and racketeer trade union leaders merely because the latter "indorse" the struggle against war and fascism in the abstract or the American League Against War and Fascism in the concrete. Such indorsements are but sinister maneuvers and do not transform reactionary trade union officials into progressive working class leaders. Typical of the disastrous influence of a wrong political line on trade

union activities is the support recently rendered by certain "lefts" to the reactionary Wallace, boss of the Chicago District Council of the Brotherhood of Painters. Every trade unionist can cite similar instances in his own union or locality.

The mighty wave of strikes organized by the unions belonging to the Committee for Industrial Organization affords the communists an extraordinary opportunity of aiding in the reconstruction of the American trade union movement, in the birth of a militant labor movement.

To the comrades of the Communist and Socialist Parties it is imperative to point out further that the sooner they bring about the abandonment of the People's Front strategy the more will the working class of this country be able to take advantage of the present favorable opportunities for building their organizations and improving their living conditions. Let no one say that the People's Front course is the sacred property of the official communists. As a matter of fact, the Comintern has only recently borrowed this reformist strategy from the Socialist International. The Comintern has only rebaptized it. More than that. In the C.I. this reformism is not yet an ingrained systematized proposition, and the motive for its adoption is basically different from the reformism of the Socialist International (L.S.I.).

The mere fact that in the American S.P. there has been some confused and loose talk against the C.P.'s application of the People's Front should lead no one to the conclusion that the party of Norman Thomas is against the People's Front in principle. We turn to Thomas for evidence on this point:

> "If in the United States we had strong fascist nations at our boundaries, a militant, definitely fascist party within, and as definite and numerous anti-fascist forces as exist in France, I should support both a united front and the People's Front. . . . " (*Socialist Call*, September 12, 1936)

This indorsement by the leader of the American Socialist Party is as clear-cut as it is generous. His election campaign plea for "democracy" and against *all* dictatorships being introduced into the U.S.A. was in line with the ideology and essence of the People's Front at its worst.

The Crisis in World Communism—An Evaluation

The issues raised by and the consequences ensuing from the People's Front line are of vital concern not only to communists and socialists but to all workers. Why are the Communist Parties now pursuing this course? Has the Comintern become as completely and definitely reformist as the Socialist (Second) International? What shall be done to overcome this sad situation in the international labor movement, particularly, in its communist section?

The Labor Day (1936) national conference of the Communist Party (Opposition) placed the issues and tasks before all militant workers, particularly the members of the Communist Party and its sympathizers, very clearly when it stressed that:

> "Under the existing conditions, the International Communist Opposition and its sections set themselves the task of helping the Comintern return to communist principles. It is possible to achieve this because the Soviet state has retained its proletarian character, and the C.P.S.U. has not abandoned communist principles, although it has brought about their abandonment by the other Communist Parties, as a result of its harboring the illusion that this is an effective defense policy of the Soviet Union. The fact that the other parties have also acted in the belief that they are benefitting the Soviet Union is sufficient reason for us not to identify their line with the policy of the Second International during the war which delivered the working class into the hands of the imperialists. Whereas the Communist International has abandoned communist principles by adopting the People's Front policy and a policy of national defense in bourgeois democratic countries on the basis of its false estimate of how to defend communism in the Soviet Union, the Second International definitely and irrevocably deserted socialism. The Third International, however, for the reasons above stated, has only gone astray and that is why we consider it our duty to do all in our power to bring it back again.
>
> "The Comintern, regardless of its best intentions, can only seriously jeopardize the possibility of developing effective Communist Parties in the capitalist world so long as it adheres to the impossible task of alone deciding the policies of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries without consulting the respective parties or taking into consideration their specific conditions and needs. This attempt necessarily ended in failure. First of all, events proved that the ultra-left course was wrong. Now the ultra-right course which has led to a break with communist principles will prove to be infinitely more dangerous. Nobody could be more concerned about the situation than we are. We helped found the C.I., worked within it for many years, fought the ultra-left course, and, even after we were expelled, still considered ourselves a part of the C.I. In setting ourselves the task of bringing the C.I. back to communist principles, we are working in the interest of the Soviet Union, and attempting to arrest the further decline and collapse of the C.I. If our effort should be in vain, we will do our best to re-establish it on a new basis to make it a vital communist force, an historically progressive instrument of communism and world revolution."

We are not sounding false alarms. We are issuing sound and timely warnings. When we raise this cry, when we signalize this danger to the life of our movement, we do it only out of the deepest concern for the principles that bind communists together throughout the world, for the principles that have served as the basis of our separation from reformism. We are confident that, if the memberships of the various sections of the Communist International were given half a chance to examine freely and critically the present dangerous tactical course of the Comintern, then this reformist, ultra-right policy could not and would not be maintained.

That is why we have emphasized and will continue to emphasize the need for establishing genuine party democracy, thorough-going democratic centralism, throughout the sections of the Communist International, for establishing a collective international leadership in the C. I. as the means with which not merely to unify the ranks of the world communist movement but as the most effective means for overcoming such grave errors and preventing the recurrence of such suicidal mistakes. It is such mistakes in strategy and tactics that are now threatening to undermine the very foundations of the international communist movement.

As long as such flagrant abandonment of communist principles prevails, it will be impossible to attain unity between the ranks of the Comintern and the ranks of the International Communist Opposition. Today, the prerequisite for communist unity is more than a return to party democracy and collective international leadership in the C.I. Today, the first prerequisite for sound communist unity is a return to those principles of communism which the Comintern and its sections have recently abandoned or put in cold storage.

Hence, we call upon all workers sympathetic to the Communist Party and those who are members of the Communist Party to end

their silence and begin to fight openly against the ultra-right course, a course which will lead to disaster—as surely as the ultra-left line led to a debacle in Germany and elsewhere. We are not afraid of being attacked for sounding the alarm. Nor should any other workers be afraid of any abuse that may be heaped on them. Infinitely greater sacrifices will have to be made by all of us in the interest of preserving and extending the ideas and ideals of world communism, of world labor.

We call upon comrades in and around the Communist Party to join our ranks so that we may together speed the day of a reunified, sound communist movement in this country and throughout the world. Today, every communist who desires to fight effectively and consistently for communist principles and policies should enroll in the ranks of the Communist Party (Opposition).

The American and international labor movements are living through critical and decisive hours. Every workingman and workingwoman should be aware of the great possibilities as well as the serious dangers at hand. In the ranks of the International Communist Opposition, in the ranks of the Communist Party (Opposition) of this country, there is that possibility for guidance, that inspiration so necessary for insuring the defeat of all capitalist reaction, the victory of the workers of all countries. To join our ranks, to work along with us, is to hasten the day of the sound unification of world communism and of the unity and triumph of the international working class.

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